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Chapter 1- Did I Do Something Wrong?

Smokekit laid peacefully, pressed up against the cold nursery den wall, She was exhausted. From what, she didn't know. Apparently, doing nothing was very tiring. She was the oldest kit in her litter. By a few heartbeats, but it still counted.

She pressed a tiny grey paw into the soft dirt beneath her, but jumped slightly when a small bug crawled out. Despite being born a time ago that She hadn't kept track of, She still saw darkness. Her mother always told her about how bright it was outside. At one point. How colorful it was, if she opened her eyes. But one day, her mother's stories were gone. And so was her mother. Even though she did open her eyes. She still saw darkness with open eyes

One day something bigger...fatter...laid with her, and to her surprise, it was a dark-gray, almost black tom, with a stripe of white on his left back paw. His green eyes, wide as an expression registered on his face, that she couldn't read. Suddenly it turned into something she could read 'sadness'.

He was uncomfortably close to her now, like her mother had been. three more kits, all slightly smaller, and seemingly a bit younger than her, walked in. one laid up against her own warm pelt.

The smallest one leaned on her and leaned into her pelt.

She touched noses with the younger cat "who are you?"she asked, but quickly corrected herself "I mean: what's your name?"she meowed quickly. She reminded herself why she was in the dark den in the first place.

"Dustkit"he meowed, flicking his tail, as if smokekit hadn't realized his sandy-colored fur yet.

"And those are my brothers, roughkit, and silentkit."he meowed

energetically, almost happily, flicking his short tail towards roughkit, A sandy brown young tom with amber eyes, and silentkit, a kit with light-brown fur who seemed reluctant to Tallk. As in probably never did.

Two bigger toms walked in, both looking at smokekit as if disgusted by her. "And those are my older brothers, twitchpaw, and Ruffledpaw."the kit added. twitchpaw was a really big tom with green eyes, clashing with his black fur. Ruffledpaw was sandy brown and splotched with black and tan.

"Hey, why do you look so wierd?"asked an energetic roughkit.

Smokekit didn't respond, but she looked at her pawd. It was light-gray with flecks of dark-gray and black. She turned hrr head to see that her back paws were the same, but her back and belly were white.

"yeah, and your eyes look funny."commented dustkit.

smokekit flinched at the rude comments from who she assumed were her siblings, and stood up, wobbly for a few heartbeats but was eventually able to run around the den happily.

she then came across a puddle and then looked up at the sky. It was about the color of most of her paw-fur. It looked really sad.

When smokekit looked into the puddle, she was saddened by what she saw:

She had a blue left eye, and a green right eye. She almost cried at her own reflection.

Suddenly she picked up the sound of yowling, which attracted her and her brothers to the clearing were a bunch of cats that smokekit couldn't recognize were gathered around.

She heard multiple cats noises of surprise and several curses being spat at her and her siblings when they pushed up to the front where two huge cats were arguing.

"You can't give her up like that! She's just a helpless little thing!"the

larger one hissed at the other one "but she's ugly! She doesn't deserve my love!"The smaller one hissed.

"Dawntail, I refuse to let you give up smokekit!"
Huh?
"You must leave instead!"the big cat snapped.
The smaller cat- Dawntail, staggered back "fine then! you are so lucky that I love my sons! "She growled in a huffy tone.

Smokekit looked around and spotted a cat, bigger than her obviously, stuffing her face with something that smokekit didn't know of but she assumed it was Food.

"she's probably trying to figure out how many bites she can take of that rabbit before a fight breaks out."ruffledpaw murmured, making smokekit snicker at his little joke.

the she-cat glared at ruffledpaw but both of them just rolled their eyes at each other.

The hungry-looking she-cat got to eat barely more than half of the prey before both cats lunged at each other, a ball of Sandy-brown fur and ginger fur.

As well as teeth, claws, and blood. Smokekit had to turn away from the fighting clan cats, and bury her face in her brother's fur.

Finally she decided to peek out, the bloody sandy-brown furred cat glared at smokekit and slashed at her face before storming off to a den.

Smokekit was panicking. Her ears and face were beeding. The whole clan was in an uproar over this now.

"I'm dizzy..."smokekit complained. She remembered the faces of her worried little and older brothers.

She saw something confusing in the darkness the glinting amber eyes of an unknown cat, staring at her through the nothingness. And she just stared right back.

"Smokekit....?...smokekit...?"roughkit's voice echoed through the

ringing in her ears.

She looked at him with a bloodshot blue eye and a green one "roughkit....?"she struggled but smiled. More excited voices from her other brothers.

It took her until now to realize that she was the only female here.

"What's going on?"she asked, sitting up. She realized that the entrance to the nursery was closed off almost completely, blocked by materials gathered from around the territory.

"well...mother and father say that we can't come see you anymore."roughkit explained.

Smokekit let a low growl rise in her chest "but that's not fair! I didn't do anything wrong!"she protested.

Roughkit just gave her a sad, sideways glance as he walked away. "Roughkit!"smokekit hissed, pouncing at the entrance and clawed at it, but she couldn't go any further as an older cat blocked off the only way out.

She let out a pained yowl. They just trapped her here! She didn't do anything wrong.,..did she?

Smokekit just laid there and cried. She knew that no one other than her brothers really cared, but even so she still held on to the knowledge that the entrance would open again at some point.

authors note-

I have to switch some of this around due to the plot not making much sense at the moment. I apologize for the confusion >:3 also...

Silentkit, roughkit, and dustkit are seven moons, why they aren't apprentices is a secret! Mweheh!

Chapter 2- Who you be?

Smokepaw laid in the now barren and abandoned den where only she was stuck. There wasn't much. Just a nest and the remains of some prey she had been given, but that had been some time ago.

She was hungry, and sick. The den was dusty and the moss in her nest was starting to smell bad. "Someone let me out..."she cried.

For the first time since she had been trapped in here. Someone answered "hello?"the voice called quietly. Normally, no one let her out until it was dark.

The voice wasn't very recognizable to smokepaw. She didn't answer, assuming that the new cat would just come in. Her apprentice ceremony had been very delayed because of the reluctance of Dawntail but she had had it a few days prior, though she couldn't recall her age.

The unfamiliar cat walked in on his own.

"Are you, smokepaw?"he asked. Smokepaw felt like her heart had just went boom. He was so...she couldn't describe it but it was wonderful.

He had pure, short white fur and light blue eyes that locked onto hers. She felt herself heat up and...blush.

The small tom noticed and copied "uhm...I brought you this..."he meowed quietly, dropping two small mice at smokepaw's paws and laid down in front of her.

He watched in awe as smokepaw tore into the small animal and ate it within just a few heartbeats. "Woah!"he mewed "that was quick!"

Smokepaw gave him a bloody grin as he took large but slow bites of his mouse.

"Why are you in here?"he asked.

"Here's a better question."smokepaw replied "who are you?"she asked. "I'm icepaw."he replied.

Smokepaw heard yelling from outside and put her head down on her paws"what's going on out there?"she asked.

Icepaw Got up and peeked through the thick barrier that had trapped smokepaw for so Long now "I think it's about your mother. Your dad is coming in h-"icepaw was cut off by the loud yelling of smokepaw's name

"Huh?"

"Its about mommy."roughkit meowed. He was clearly very scared, he was practically shaking. his paws thretaning to stop supporting his weight at any given time.

"what about her?"smokepaw asked.

"we just found out that something happened to her near the thunderpath. Come on."ruffledpaw explained urgently.

"Can icepaw come?"smokepaw asked, giving the Slightly older tom a sideways glance that made him blush.

She smiled at him.

He smiled back.

"Sure whatever, just come on!"ruffledpaw replied, already starting to hurry out of the den. icepaw was right on his tail, but smokepaw trailed behind a biryslower than them "hey ruffledpaw?" she asked.

"Yeah, li'l sis?"

"How old am I?"

"11 moons."the tom replied.

"oh OK...." her ceremony delayed for longer than she had thought. Why did her mother hate her so much?

"You should be 12 soon though" ruffledpaw added.

All of them engaged in meaningless conversation for a while until icepaw asked "do you have a mate?" To twitchpaw and ruffledpaw.

Twitchpaw flinched. Ruffledpaw nodded.

"Since we are only apprentices, we can't actually become mates, or have kits yet but technically yes." Ruffledpaw answered.

Smokepaw and icepaw nodded. Smokepaw noticed twitchpaw flinch "what's wrong?"she asked.

"I did have a 'mate' but she died."

"How?"

"Greencough."

"What's that?"smokepaw asked.

"Its a relatively common but dangerous sickness that normally spreads through the clans during leaf-bare. It's not uncommon for it to take a few cats lives." Ruffledpaw explained solemnly, not daring to look at twitchpaw.

"That's sad."icepaw commented abruptly, earning dirty looks from everyone but twitchpaw who didn't even look up.

Now this might be a problem... Smokepaw thought and looked back at icepaw, who's Ears and tail were drooping from guilt.

"Don't feel bad about it. You didn't mean to sound rude."smokepaw whispered to icepaw as the thunderpath came into view.

No response.

Out of nowhere, everyone broke into a mad dash for the thunderpath, except for smokepaw and icepaw who hung back for a while.

When smokepaw and icepaw finally got to the thunderpath.

smokepaw's light-gray paws were terribly sore, causing her to wince when she used them.

"Momma!"roughkit squeaked.

Dawntail was crouched near a bush, a gash on her side that seemed to have just been merrily patched up, the medicine cat, Dreamheart, next to her, and she looked up at smokepaw and her siblings, for icepaw had gone back into the shadows.

"You're all Dawntail's kits?"she asked, her fluffy ginger fur bristling.

smokepaw and her brothers nodded.

"I'm not completely sure what happened, but I found her like this. She's wet and has a weird scent on her."Dreamheart explained.

Ruffledpaw sniffed his mother and the look in his eyes proved that all alarms had gone off inside his head "it smells like a cat that I can't identify, but definitely shadowclan."Ruffledpaw meowed and turned to dawntail.

"What do you want us to do?"he asked.

Dawntail looked up at him "smokepaw."smokepaw flinched. "Have Adderstar offer her to shadowclan. She will spy on them. And when we want her back. We start a war."

Roughkit, dustkit, and tiny silentlkit sidestepped in front of smokepaw protectively"we won't let you!"they all growled, well, silentkit didn't, obviously, but he tried.

No one moved for an uncomfortable amount of time "it's decided. You'll be sent to the gathering with adderstar tonight. If you even attempt to refuse? You'll be done for eith windclan."dreamheart told smokepaw.

Smokepaw shrunk back. She thought medicine cats were nice! Well...at least that's what her mother had told her at one time. she sighed knowing there was no way out if this situation. She couldn't do anything about it.

The gathering was uncomfortable. Smokepaw got unnerving stares from everyone there except Adderstar who only glanced at her from time to time.

When the two got near the large great rock, catching almost everyone's attention adderstar whispered warmly "I'm sorry for this, I wish you the best of luck, dear. May starclan light your path..."

Before smokepaw could ask about it, adderstar was up in one of the four big oak trees, shushing everyone else.

The first to speak was a slightly-scarred-and-mean-looking white she-cat with Black paws and tail tip "there has been saddening kit deaths this moon. one from sickness, two dead at birth, both took the queen with them, the rest were from something unknown. they may not be dead but they have dissapeared."

Confused and horrified murmurs arose from the crowd until adderstar spoke up. And this is where the adventure *really* started "flashstar! I would like to propose a trade. I would like to offer a noble ans loyal warrior. What will you give me?"

Another cat from the trees, a smokey black one with piercing green eyes, flashed her gaze to adderstar, looking not very happy"who is this warrior?"she asked instead.

"Smokepaw."

"Paw?!"

"She's old enough to be a warrior. "

Flashstar nodded"here and now. Make her a warrior, and I will then accept her."she demanded.

Adderstar nodded quickly. Was she scared of flashstar?

She jumped down to the ground and smokepaw flinched before stiffening up.

"Smokepaw. You have shown to have a strong will, and your ability to stay strong through all this impresses me, and I'm sure it will impress flashstar. From now on you will be known as smoketrail."

To smokepaw's surprise, shadowclan and windclan called her name "Smoketrail! Smoketrail!"

The attention made her blush, but what caught her eye was a tom looking at her, with a smile that ice-whatever his warrior name was- would be jealous of.

He had pale ginger fur and golden amber eyes.

He smiled.

She smiled back.

on the way to my new clan-shadowclan- he told me "I'm Goldeneyes."

"I'm smoketrail."

We stopped, having fallen behind the rest of the clan.

"Yeah I noticed."he meowed sarcastically.

Smoketrail laughed "yeah, the whole forest probably knows it by now."

they talked casually until Goldeneyes tackled Smoketrail with a sense of playfulness.

It went both up and downhill from there.

Chapter 3- I Didn't Think This Through Clearly!

(⚠ warning ⚠ mild language)

Shadn'tmokettwik slept since she had arrived in shadowclan, and it was bothering her. She felt that she needed a break from everything going on in her life from spending time with Goldeneyes to trying to prove her loyalty.

Now away from her birth clan, she felt conflicted with mixed emotions. She wss excited to be here, but she missed both iceglare and her brothers, but while out on patrol, he showed up.

"I know that this is really wrong, but I miss you so much and I can't ignore the way I feel about you for any longer. I have myself a mate, but...it's just not the same. I need you.."

So smoketrail offered him some prey and to walk with him back to the windclan-shadowclan border, however he seemed a little hesitant when she suggested that she should return to camp.

Suddenly he got kinda close, so much so that it was making her nervous as well as curious to what he was doing.

"Uh, hey..."

"Yes?" He replied in a mischevious tone, getting closer until she had nowhere to go.

This event lead to some things she wish she could forget. It wasn't long until she met a cat- a rouge that seemed to have been exiled from a clan. She smelled slightly of thunderclan and windclan.

"Look, you're Smoketrail right? Every time I see my mate it seems that he smells like shadowclan. I pried until he told me who you

were."

"I....." she had no idea what to say to the angry female. Her face was probably as priceless as she was confused.

"I'm just gonna cut to the chase. There's something I want and if I don't get it, I'm telling your mate. His name is goldeneyes, right?"

smoketrail started to panic, so much so that the next night she raced to where she and iceglare often met "why did you tell Her?" I hissed, the anger flaring in my green and blue eyes.

" I'm So sorry, I didn't know that she would do this !"

His fur was dirty, from what I didn't know, but I'd never seen a cat like him so pathetic looking.

"so was your whole story a setup!?"

"I don't know anything about it!"

"Stop pretending, for starclan's sake!"

"I didnt know, Smoketrail!!"

"oh starclan, how could I let this happen...?"

"please, just give her whatever she wants and no one has to know what we've done!"

"I'm sorry-"
smoketail flinched "how could I do this to goldeneyes...?!"

"if you give her what she wants we can stay together!" Iceglare repeated

"No!" I snapped back in response

"Just for a while!" He insisted

"The situations helpless..."

"It's not, I promise. "

"There's nothing else I can do, I have to say no or else....he'll hate me..." then paused with a sigh. "Fine..."

"Seriously?"iceglare piped up a bit.
"no..."
"N-No....?"
"I don't....know.." smoketrail responded.

oh starclan please tell me how to get out of this, this is crazy! She thought

Yes, no, yes no, what do I do!? I don't want to break his heart, but..
"I guess there's not much I can do now..." S moketrail sighed heavily.

Iceglare meowed " please Don't say no..."

In her mind she still wanted to decline. But then brightshine- standing nearby- interrupted her thoughts and said "what's the deal?"

Smoketrail took a long look at iceglare and Brightshine and took a deep breath, in no way believing that her, herself was doing this to Goldeneyes, the father of the kits she was pregnant with, a good few days before iceglare returned to her life.
what Now?

"Nobody needs to know...."

Smoketrail was sleeping peacefully, up against GoldenEyes when voices broke into her dreams. she woke up but didn't open her eyes until he jumped up and so she jumped up to.

"What's wrong?"smoketrail asked, licking his cheek.

He smiled at her, and purred, giving her an affectionate nuzzle on her neck. "Good morning sweetheart, but this is about you. I don't know what though..."

All alarms went off in smoketrail's head. *uh-oh! I think I already*

know. And I think I know how this is gonna go. Oh..no...

The two of them padded to the base of the almost completely moss-covered rock, that flashstar stood on.

Neither her or her deputy were very happy. Flashstar spoke first unluckily"have you heard about this!?"

"We've discovered that one of the newest of our warriors has broken the clan code!"Firefly-the deputy- hissed.

Smoketrail flinched as her name was mentioned, and felt Goldeneyes' gaze fall back on her.

"the Information came from a windclan warrior who carried a message from adderstar, who claims that it was brightshine, an ex windclan warrior who was the current mate of Iceglare who was also involved."The unimpressed leader continued,

Smoketail was scared now, but became braver, at least that's what she called it, and stood supiriorly in front of flashstar

"everything that adderstar says....It's all true. This al was not meant to happen. On another note, brightshine knew what we were doing.."

"I had meetings with him near the windclan border, all of which at night that went unnoticed."

"Goldeneyes, didn't know because I always left him sleeping throughout these meetings with iceglare...It hurt me to do it..but I continued..."

Smoketrail saw the hurt in Goldeneyes' now wide sparkling eyes "no...."

Multiple cats sent yowls of protest.
"She'll never be leader Now!" Cried some of the angry cats among them.

"I guess that's one less thing to worry about..."she muttered.

Suddenly a very, *VERY* angry Thunderclan cat rushed in with a pelt almost identical to Goldeneyes' "I came as soon as soon as I heard what happened!"she yelped.

"What!?"Goldeneyes squeaked."Sunsetstreak-"

"No way!" Smometrail cried. "Sunsetstreak, finally, someone who understands what I'm trying to do..."smoketrail mewed sheepishly.

"I'm not here for you!"she growled fiercely.

More murmurs rose above that at one point settling crowd.

"I don't know what's wrong with your head, but my big brother is a loyal and amazing cat that you don't deserve! You don't deserve a cat like him as your mate, you don't!" As the she-cat continued to angrily scold smoketrail and yell, tears streamed down the ginger cats face.

Goldeneyes was in tears now too, as was smoketail "this isn't fair...." smoketrail heard her mate murmur as his younger sister came up at his side.

Flashstar wss silent, her green eyes fixed in a green glare.

Suddenly firefly jumped back in"i've heard of cross-clan relationships, but this?! This is just cruel to the cat you love!"

"Oh no...."

Chapter 4- Love Is Stronger Than I Am.

When smoketrail woke up she saw that no one was around her, should she feel bad? Did Goldeneyes hate her now? Apparently not. When she yelped his name, he came running.

"Yes, sweetheart?"he asked frantically.

Smoketrail nuzzled him and stared into his shocked amber eyes

"I'm sorry...I'm so sorry for everything that i did to you, I don't know what I was thinking falling for him before, but you're my true love."

He laughed. "What's so funny?"smoketrail asked irritably.

In response he pinned her down like a playful apprentice.

Smoketrail felt his warm belly against hers, and heard the soft purr the rumbled in his chest. They were soulmates. They will be forever.

She pulled away from Goldeneyes which startled him "what's wrong?"he asked

"Well the thing is...I'm..,"she trailed off as Goldeneyes sat in front of her "what?"

"I'm expecting...."she finished making sure not to make eye contact with him.

"Huh?"goldeneyes looked confused for a bit then suddenly jumped to his paws "great starclan, are you expecting *my* kits!?"he meowed in astonishment.

Smoketrail's nodded, once again playfully tackled by her mate as he played with her like a pair of kits would .

They both purred almost in unison.

--

For smoketrail, some of the next few weeks was just a blurr, she felt how much he truly loved her even after what he had done to him two moons ago.

Suddenly she felt something. A sharp pain that shot through her belly. She whimpered in pain.

Goldeneyes got to his paws and rushed to get the medicine cat.

Smoketrail tried to run to the medicine den but couldn't make it far and stopped.

"What's wrong?"asked Sakurabloom.

"I-"she was cut off by another shoot of pain, and crouched instinctively, making some of the pain ebb off but not for long.

Goldeneyes and sakurabloom carried her to the medicine den, since the nursery was too much of a bad memory.

The two worked quickly as smoketrail yowled and moaned in her extreme pain and let out a screech as her Belly spasmed and she almost passed out fro, exaustion.

Pain shot through her body as a small kit appeared on the moss near her.

Goldeneyes stood by her and purred comfort to her.

Smoketrail didn't feel quite right, and she felt sick, though she smiled at the sight of four kits at her belly.

Sakurabloom was studying one and pulled the small kit from her mother. She sniffed and inspected the kit for a moment. She shook her head and put the small kit in smoketrail's paws "she's going to pass soon."she explained and stepped away respectively.

Smoketrail and goldeneyes whispered and nudged the kit and purred, hoping the it would survive. Smoketrail was first to notice the heartbeat pause.

She let out a pained yowl as did Goldeneyes.

"No...my baby.,."smoketrail sobbed "my poor baby..."

No one else, not even Goldeneyes had any words for her. This had happened on her very first time.

Two of the kits seemed to be alert and purr, though one seemed confused.

Smoketrail was worried about this but managed to hardly shrug it off, licking her remaining healthy kits.

Smoketrail was finally allowed to move around more after a while, with her kits more active and able to eat solids.

as soon as she walked back into the nursery- "hi momma!" came an exited mew. She smiled at her kits.

"What you been doing momma?"asked Emberkit, a white kit with blue eyes and ginger speckles all over her pelt.

"Hi momma.."meowed splitkit, who had her face split right down the middle, ginger on her Right, black on her left, and she had smoketrail's mismatched eyes.

"Hello little ones."smoketrail purred and finally moved to the corner where hopekit always was, the poor thing was weak and could hardly eat. Smoketrail had no idea what to do.

sakurabloom had tried to feed her mushed up meat. she ate it, but threw it right back up. She said: *if she makes it just a little longer, she'll survive.* And it had been three-and-a-half moons since her birth.

Hopefully she would make it to four, they had named her hopekit,

because she was so fragile, and staying alive was her only hope.

"Do you think she'll ever get better?"smoketrail asked, sakurabloom, glancing at her worriedly.

"She seems to be holding up. You know, smoketrail...you've got a real fighter here."sakurabloom replied, with a smile.

Smoketrail was about to reply when a loud yowl pierced the air.

They both ran to the leader's den where flashstar was panicking"what's wrong?"sakurabloom asked calmly.

"My kits...t-they're missing...I can't find them anywhere...." Flashstar answered, trembling like a frightened kit.

Smoketrail gasped at the same time as the medicine cat "Oh no....."sakurabloom meowed.

Flashstar nodded almost unable to speak "patchkit, quietkit, and Angelkit. all three."

Sakurabloom nodded "where did you see them last?"

"They were asleep with my other daughter, wavepaw...."

Smoketrail's eyes widened"oh my starclan, flashstar.....she isn't there....all of the apprentices were asleep when I last checked, but I didn't see her...oh starclan...."

Flashstar let out a shriek "my baby's are gone! Please send warriors to find them! I need them back! I can't go on without them!"she growled.

Smoketrail gave a swift nod before bursting out the den screaming"all cats old enough to catch their own pray, please report to the mossrock for an important clan meeting!" Even though she knew it wasn't her place to do this, it was the first thing that came to mind.

Cats rushed out to the clearing and surrounded smoketrail, not too close though.

"flashstar's kits have gone missing, the young three and the older one. A group of cats including myself will be leaving to search for them. After the territory, we search windclan."

Chapter 5- In Trouble

Smoketrail continued on through the dark woods, staying close to Goldeneyes. "I hope our kits are OK..."she heard him mutter, which made her shudder.

It started to rain, making literally every cat shout curses at the sky. As a result it started to thunder and lightning.

Smoketrail walked backwards for a moment, and then stopped, facing the group "look. Flashstar doesn't want her kits to be born without these four in good health."

Everyone but one cat exclaimed "she's expecting!?"

Smoketrail nodded"she's having her kits very soon and she wants her previous kits to be there. We have to find these kits alive, more or less. It has too happen no matter what!"

Everyone nodded but lightning struck, scaring the apprentices that had come along.

Everyone agreed on a huge oak tree, that was warm.

Once settled inside, cloverleaf shifted uncomfortably "smoketrail, what happens if we don't find them?"she asked sweetly.

"Well-"

"she'll go insane."answered a dull voice "she'll shut everyone out. And if we return with the news that we didn't find them, if they do turn up at some point, she'll be too far gone."

smoketrail looked around to see who was talking.

"Foxflame, give it a rest." One of the apprentices muttered, and her gazed flickered to flashstar's mate

"I can't believe her mate, of all cats would say that about her! She

won't go insane! I'll make sure of that!"smoketrail hissed.

Foxflame looked angry and moved in on her, and she growled fiercely as they became nose-to-nose.

"H-hey. That's n-not funny..."smoketrail stammered, betraying how she made herself appear to feel.

Foxflame grinned slyly "you're afraid."he said simply

"W-what?"

"You're afraid that I'm going to do something to you. I'm not Iceglare. I'm not."

(first person from here on, smoketrail's pov)

Everyone gasped, and my eyes instantly teared up and I flinched at the memories that I had of us back then. I scratched him across the face with the most true warning that I had ever given:

"If you ever, *ever*, mention him, or what happened, again. I. Will. Hurt you. And I mean *bad.* and I *promis*e I won't hesitate to do so."I growled, and not until a little after the shocked silence, and the recovery from the memory, I realized I had my claws to his neck.

I backed off and buried my muzzle into Goldeneyes' fur and cried.

Goldeneyes snarled at foxflame"stay away from my mate no matter what! She's the most important thing in my life, and if you try to ruin my life. We are going to have a big problem."

Lightning struck and I sank closer to Goldeneyes"I'm scared of storms...."I admitted "it's because I was always alone most of the day Every day for as long as I can remember."

Then, some familiar cats passed by our little tree den and I pulled them into the den and started grooming the oldest one, without regarding their now happy wet faces.

"Why did you save us?"roughpaw asked after I had groomed the other two brothers.

"Because I love you guys. I couldn't ever let you stay out there, even if you were any other cat. You're too young to die out here. All alone..."

Roughpaw smiled, fluffing up his fur"well I wasn't scared at all! Those stupid warriors chased us out of the camp!"he explained bravely, his gaze shifting to the she-cat apprentices that sat, giving him doubtful glances. Silentpaw suppressed a smile.

I laughed and called at them "Coldpaw, Acepaw, fidgetpaw, come here please, meet my brothers."I called.

The three she-cats got up and made their way over to us.

"H-hi..."meowed fidgetpaw, and she twitched.

"Hello."Acepaw meowed politely, bowing her head, making roughpaw blush.

"Hiya!" coldpaw meowed energetically.

If he had known how, I bet roughpaw would have whistled.

Fidgetpaw was quiet and Calm, though when she was angry, she was *angry*. She had a beautiful calico pelt with her eyes beautiful amber.

Coldpaw was energetic and optimistic. A ball or fur and energy. Her actual fur itself was blue-gray with a white mask on her eyes, her own eyes piercing blue.

And acepaw. acepaw was surely the most beautiful of the three. She had a fluffy and soft tan pelt, with grey paws, and Gray mask on her face. She was polite and it was always hard to tell how she was feeling normally, though I've seen her playful side.

Roughpaw and dustpaw were speechless. Their gazes fixed on Acepaw like I expected.

"Sis, I think they like you~"coldpaw teased playfully

" shut up."acepaw shot back.

"I'll tell mom. "coldpaw replied.

Acepaw shut up.

roughpaw's eye darted around nervously and he seemed not to be able to figure out what to say.

After what felt like a million moons he seemed more confident "in fact I do."he said smoothly "and I'm not afraid to admit it."he added.

Acepaw stepped back, the look on her face priceless. Then she tackled my little brother with a flash of playfulness.

She was a blur until the two landed, acepaw on roughpaw.

"H-hey...you know, if you're allowed to join us...I would love to get to know you better..."she stammered.

"w-wait!"coldpaw interrupted, and the two got up, and roughpaw stood face to face with coldpaw.

"What?"he asked, seeming annoyed at the younger cat.

"You c-cant handle my sister! S-she's so nice and perfect! And-and you'll just ruin her!"coldpaw replied, fearfully standing up to roughpaw.

"And even being a warrior is like a huge hole in the dirt so big that to it, you're like a tiny pebble!"she hissed.

"Oh really?"roughpaw growled getting so close to her that she almost lost her Balemce.

"Well then turn around, crouch down, I'll show you a hole that I can sure fit something else in."roughpaw snarled back.

Coldpaw's eyes widened at his smart remark and she staggered back.

"how rude! Perv!"she hissed and slashed him across the face and trotted off to snuggle with one of the other patrol cats.

"Sorry about my sister. I guess she took your joke the wrong way. You wouldn't really do that, right?"Acepaw meowed, gazing at roughpaw.

Roughpaw nodded hesitantly "never. I'm really glad I came out tonight. "

"Why are you out here anyway?"I asked quickly.

Roughpaw's ears went down and acepaw rubbed up against him.

"We got kicked out."dustpaw explained "roughpaw lived up to his name, and when he was playing with another cat, he started getting to rough and actually hurt 'em pretty bad. Again."

My eyes flickered to my little brother and I stormed up to him with a stern look "you idiot! Why would you do that!?"I snapped.

"I didn't mean to! I-"

"Don't make excuses you little mousebrain! You know good and well not to play rough, and its unacceptable. Heck, I should deny letting you stay with us and deny you the chance to join shadowclan, all because I can't trust that you won't do it again!"

I realized that acepaw and roughpaw were sunk back, crouched on the ground, their ears flat against their heads, and so was my other two brothers.

"s-sis? Y-you wouldn't really leave us to die...would you?"he stammered defenslessly.

Then I really snapped. I aimlessly launched at him, scratching and biting until Goldeneyes forcefully pulled me off.

"Woah woah, calm down..."he meowed calmly, though his voice shook more violently than he did.

Roughpaw was crying, bleeding, and yowling in pain.

Acepaw kept close to him, pressed up against his side, purring and whispering helplessly, that everything would be fine, but everyone knew she didn't believe her own words.

I stared at my bloody paws and the pool of blood from my little brother.

"I knew he would be in big trouble for that, but I didn't think it would be that bad..."dustpaw mewed "I'm so sorry"he cried, laying with his brother.

I turned around to get out and faced Goldeneyes instead.

The look on his face was something like 'what's wrong with you...?' But in a worried way.

I asked myself a question...

What have I done..?

chapter 6- accidents happen, but was it really?

I felt like I couldn't breath. I couldn't sleep either.

What happened had really shaken me up, and I felt dizzy and started to stumble, as I walked alongside Goldeneyes.

"o-oh..,oh my starclan I don't feel good..."I groaned.

"Are you OK?"my mate asked sweetly.

I shook my head "no I am not ok...I feel sick...Goldeneyes, I seriously feel sick...."I replied.

"Uh, should we stop again? We haven't made much progress, but it might be best. Silentpaw isn't looking too well either..."my mate replied.

I meowed something that even I couldn't understand, my voice was too slurred. I couldn't hear it anyways. I felt horribly lightheaded and my vision kept blurring.

I kept going until I finally collapsed. The rest was mostly a literal blur. I heard voices, but I couldn't respond. I felt bile rise in my throat, and I know I threw up.

A few times.

Then my vision went completely black.

When I came back into consciousness, I was glad to say that most of the group seemed fine.

Acepaw and roughpaw were still scared half-to-death.

Roughpaw looked like a bloody mess. He was covered in dark, dry blood, and one of his eyes had a scratch over it.

I sat up, thinking I was fine, but as soon as I did so, I felt dizzy again.

Goldeneyes came from the corner of my eye and helped me stay upright by letting me lean on him.

"Is silentpaw OK?"I asked weakly.

Goldeneyes nodded "Silentpaw?"he asked and the young cat padded over, quiet as always ad rubbed against me and purred.

I laid down and he purred. And collapsed into my paws.

I heard a soft, weak voice"they're close...b..but...It's...coming..."

I flinched and everyone was staring at silentpaw.

I looked at him "what's coming? Who are "they" ?"

"I feel it. Their pain. Overheated, burned, they're pain, I feel all of it..."silentpaw Continued. I'd be lying if I said I'd heard any cat talk like this before,

I'd also be lying if I understood it.

"Silentpaw, tell me. Who is this "they"?"I asked.

He looked past me with a blank stare"don't you hear them? Don't you smell it? Dont you see it..?It's so painful..."he whimpered.

Suddenly acepaw and roughpaw perked up "smoketrail....he's right....I smell it.."acepaw muttered.

Roughpaw looked alarmed, and I looked behind me at thick black smoke in the air "oh my starclan! Its a smoke trail, smoketrail!"he squeaked.

"Ha-ha."I hissed. I stood up "you're right. Let's follow it."I ordered

and dashed off, my friends and family after me.

Everyone stopped dead in their tracks when we saw the cause of the smoke. A huge fire.

And it was spreading really bad. And really, dangerously, fast.

Cryptic-glass-eyed-looking silentpaw continued"they're cries are loud, they're burning...you have to save them!"

"Who are *th-"*I paused when I heard piercing cries, and saw tiny paws through the flames.

"Oh my st- it's the kits. Everybody, as soon as you spot their paws, go after them!"I yowled.

"Are you crazy!? what about the fire?!"dustpaw hissed.

"The kits are our main focus. Now go, *go, GO!* Acepaw, you go after angelkit! Roughpaw, you go after wavepaw-!"

"wavepaw in a fire, how ironic."roughpaw muttered before him and acepaw dashed off.

I rolled my eyes"fidgetpaw, patchkit. Coldpaw, cloudkit! All warriors, follow an apprentice. I'll go to check to see if there are any other cats trapped in the fire!"

And with that, everyone was lost in the mass if flames. My eyes watered from all of the smoke.

Silentpaw trailed after me "they're in big trouble. Big brother's in trouble...."he mewed and winced. He suddenly yelped.

I crouched down to him, alarmed"what is it!?"

"i feel big brother's pain...he's getting hurt. The fire is taking him. And acepaw...and the kit...with him.."

He then painfully yowled in. Well. Pain. "Big Sis, You have to help them!"he cried.

I nodded"stay here. If you feel like you're in danger, head out towards the river."I ordered, and ran off "acepaw! Roughpaw!"I yowled.

I heard responses but not what the responses were.

After what felt like moons of running around helplessly, I saw acepaw and roughpaw, acepaw crouched over a terrified kit, roughpaw shielding wavepaw.

And they were stuck under a fallen burning branch.

the burned kit was passed out, and wavepaw looked like she was about to be.

I got into hunters crouch, before lunging at the branch and hit it, knocking it to the side, and winced as the flames singed my pelt.

I nodded at them, as they picked up the younger cats by their scruffs "head towards the river. Now."

They ran off ducking their heads to go through the flames.

I kept going around. There was nothing there it seemed.

And so I ran out to the river, hoping that everyone was there.

When I returned to my friends and family at the river, everyone looked a mess.

the kits were all blacked out except for patchkit who seenee completely black, since the fire had singed his white fur, and his black fur leaving him looking like an all black kit.

Wavepaw was leaning on roughpaw, looking dazed.

Silentpaw looked around"its home."

That officially set me off, and without warning, I got up and ran.

If there was trouble at home. If the fire had gone so far that it

reached shadowclan, this was definite trouble.

I didn't look back, though I heard cats racing after me.

I froze unexpectedly, and every cat slid into one another.

"the fire really did reach camp, it spread all the way here...cats, listen up! Get the kits first, then the queens and elders. any of you is free to help out the apprentices and flashstar, the same goes for the warriors."

It happened so quickly, but eventually, some twolegs had made the fire go out. the four clans were very panicked at fortrees which were still standing thankfully.

Everyone was arguing about how it happened. Finally, I stepped up.

"I have reason to believe that windclanclan caused this devastation." Gasps came from the crowd "you may believe this is just an accusation, but I have some proof. You four, step up."

As I spoke, I was staring right into iceglare's eyes.

I sat down and looked at patchkit"you first. What happened?"

"i-i..."he began nervously "i-i was um...I s-saw something on fire...b-but the fire was calm, and was staying in one place..."

cloudkit continued for him"and then this cat..,with white fur...and blue eyes...found us..he was silent and just sat next to the fire..."

"Splitkit wanted to ask him what he was doing, and he jumped, and his paws hit something and all of the fire started to spread everywhere...really fast...and the piece of burning wood he knocked over fell on splitkit...and...and..she....."flashstar came up and nudged cloudkit comfortingly.

"The cat looked back at us...it was a..uh..h-he....he told me 'now she will know how I deal with traitors' then he went away. We were all trapped in the fire....it was so scary...."angelkit meowed.

"This had been the same cat that had taken us away from shadowclan....but he did something...."wavepaw trailed off.

My eyes flickered to her "what did he do?"I hissed.

Wavepaw started to cry "he got me alone ...I don't know where! And when we were there he asked me if I knew smoketrail! And when I said yes...he...h-he..."she took a deep breath"

"he did something bad to me..."

I stormed up to iceglare"you...FOXHEART!"I snarled and slashed deeply at his face. "how dare you!?"I growled.

No response.

I took a deep breath and stepped back to the kits and wavepaw.

"About the fire...I know, accidents happen...but the big question is...was it *really* an accident? Was it really an accident that my kit died to you? Because you and your Selfishness? I don't think so"

Chapter 7- Now I'm Crazy

I sat with Goldeneyes in the warriors den. It was super hot, and I was panting in exaustion.

Hopekit was more alert now that she was somewhat older.

However she was still a bit confused. Because of her sisters lack of experience and her sickness, I had practically spoiled emberkit, but now since splitkit was dead, and hopekit was slightly disabled, I had spoiled her more, but then hopekit started bing more active, so she started to hit her and be mean to her and treat the poor thing like a slave.

And I couldn't do a thing about it because they were too troublesome. Plus I'm not sure what to do about it. Anyway. Goldeneyes is still furious over splitpaw's death, and was going crazy over the thought of getting revenge.

I was too, but I had kits to take care of. My thoughts were interrupted by arguing. It was the kits.

I rushed to the nursery, from the warriors den to see hopekit and emberkit fighting

"hey, get off of me!"hopekit begged

"no! This is for what you did!"emberkit hissed back.

The larger kit was on top of the other, tearing at her body, leaving most of her limbs limp "please...! I didn't mean to....I didn't mean to!"hopekit yowled helplessly. I heard a snap and she screeched.

Emberkit's eyes were blank, her expression dark. She had just broke her sister's leg and didn't care. Actually, I don't know if she cared or not.

"Goldeneyes!"I screeched, running back to my mate, dragging him to the nursery where he looked on in horror as more snapping

sounded, with the harsh movements emberkit forced on her sister.

At last Goldeneyes ripped her away from hopekit, as the little kit laid helplessly on the ground and I rushed to her side "hopekit? C-can you move?"I stammered,

"Mommmyyyyy..,"she cried "it hurts....it really hurts!"she cried.

"I know....mommy's here, just don't cry, its OK..."I soothed, but she kept screaming.

I looked at Goldeneyes and sakurabloom. After a moment I cried into my daughter's pelt. While I hadn't been paying attention she had passed so quickly.

I cried

And cried

And cried.

All night.

Grieving for my other lost kit. I pushed everyone away.
Emberkit apologized until she lost her voice, but I was so overcome by hatred that she killed her sister.....

That I murdered her....I choked her to death.

"Goldeneyes...."I began, but my mate would not speak to me. He was ignoring me. "I want to ask you something...." I meowed meekly,

"What now?"he hissed.

"I want to ask about having more kits...."I mewed. He agreed. But every time something would happen.
Stillborns,Getting sick.
Starclan was torturing me.

Then one day, we were given some grim information from sakurabloom "if you two keep trying for kits, your bodies won't be

able to regenerate cells to have kits. I think that smoketrail might become infertile, and Goldeneyes, you might be unable to provide for a while, there's only one way to fix this.."She meowed "whats that?"came from my mouth for some reason.

Sakurabloom asked me to step out for a while, so I did.

I went into the warriors den and was about to fall asleep when I felt foxflame lay next to me, I opened my eyes and met his. He licked tears off my face that I hadn't noticed that I'd been crying.

"Shh, it'll be ok, just relax."he purred. I sighed in response.

Foxflame stood over me and that was that.

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afterwards I was exausted but I didn't mind. I got up and headed back to the medic den where I thought my mate and sakurabloom would be.

They were still there, but as I watched, I saw my nightmare unfold.

Sakurabloom was in a crouch, but Goldeneyes refused. I thought it was fine until she lifted her tail, expelling a strong scent.

Goldeneyes couldn't resist heat.

So that was the end of that.

Full of anger I burst in "what in the darkforest is going on here!?" I snapped, tears already running down my face as my eyes showed fury.

Goldeneyes jumped back in surprise, and sakurabloom laid down, putting her tail between her legs.

"Well!?"I hissed.

No response.

Sakurabloom ignored me.

My mate was looking super flustered, and looking far more guilty than the she-cat. I couldn't even imagine what was going on in her mind

And I hated her, and stormed out.

That night it stormed, an I refused to speak with anyone once again.

Goldeneyes Came up to me, looking me in the eyes "I'm sorry.,.I didn't know this was going to happen..."he apologized, licking my face.

I turned away from him, then felt his rough tongue on my neck "don't be like that..."he purred, settling down next to me. "Just because they died, doesn't mean our love has to die with it..."he purred.

I looked at him and smiled faintly.

In the morning I woke up early to speak with flashstar who greeted me with a smile. Wavepaw, and roughpaw were sitting there as well, hanging out with each other happily.

I dipped my head to her "good morning."I meowed.

"Hello, smoketrail."she purred. I saw her face give off the expression of pain but she stayed quiet.

"What's wrong?"I asked.

"My...kits!"she gasped.

I nodded, and rushed off, getting sakurabloom and bringing her back to flashstar.

It was basically a *bloodbath.* Flashstar wouldn't, I mean *couldn't*, be quiet.

There was blood everywhere.

Most kits were born, bloody and dead. One survived though.

Flashstar was dying. She lost a lot of blood during her kitting and was still bleeding. She struggled for breath. Woth her last breaths she managed to speak only slightly. She named the bloody, living kit.

Peachkit.

That was the name she murmured before her heartbeat skipped a beat, continued, stopped,

....and never beat again.

Chapter 8- All I See Is Flames

Flashstar was gone. Our new leader was splitstar. She was the most perfect she-cat anyone could ask for. She got her name from a deep V split down the center of her right ear.

Her and foxflame ended up becoming mates. However Splitstar already had a kit.

Her name was Flamepaw. She had a bright firey red pelt, and white paws. She always sat by splitstar's side. She was one of the most annoying apprentices I've ever met.

She acted like everyone was her slave, but only one thing stopped her from being the most rude cat that ever existed.
Rebelclan.

It was a group of rogues that were on the clan's side. This group of rogues allowed any of the clans to send kits or apprentices to them to fix their behaviour and shape them into responsible she-cat's and toms. BUT When it comes to she-cats, the punishment is.....horrible. that's what I'd heard.

"Hey, smoketrail?"came a voice from behind me. I spun around to find splitstar and foxflame, Flamepaw standing in the middle of the two, however also in between them stood a
tom-kit.

"This is firekit. He's my son. "Foxflame meowed.

"Okay...and?"I replied.

"Me and foxflame need to go and have a talk with the rebelclan. I want you to kittensit Flamepaw and Firekit. You will also likely need to nurse him."splitstar explained.

I huffed "do I have an option?"I asked. I already knew that the answer was-

"No. You dont."splitstar hissed, turning, flicking her tail in annoyance and padding off to exit camp.

"Look, if they cause any trouble, tell us when we come back. Do not let Flamepaw play, or get dirty, or else her mother will *freak*."foxflame meowed.

"Foxflame, we don't have all day!"Splitstar snapped.

"Coming!"foxflame called. "And don't let firekit out of your sight! He's wild and will mess up and break anything he can! And whatever you do don't lose them!"He explained before running off after splitstar.

As I watched them leave, I turned back to flamepaw and Firekit. Flamepaw looked annoyed and fire kit was extra hyper.

"So, what do you kits do for fun?"I asked.

"Tsk."flamepaw flicked her tail and walked away. "Catch me if you can!" firekit teased, running off towards the medecine den. "Firekit, wait up!"i hissed, chasing after him.

By the time I reached the medecine den firekit was already tearing up the inside. There were herbs and moss scattered everywhere, all torn up.

Of course then Sakurabloom walked in. She let out a huge yowl "FIREKIT!" but firekit had already ran out.

"I'm so sorry, sakurabloom! I'm supposed to be taking care of them! You know I'm not the best at taking care of kits..."I apoligized.

"No don't be."sakurabloom meowed. "This is the eighth time that brat has wreaked havoc on the camp this moon! I'm sick of it! As soon as his parents get back I'm going to make sure he gets sent to the rebelclan! "She hissed.

I quickly nodded and padded back out into the clearing, letting out a yelp when I saw what had happened.

Firekit had torn up everything! The dens were a mess, even the

leader's son! And Flamepaw was covered in mud dirt and grass.

I quickly ran into the apprentice den, grabbing firekit and tossed him in the medecine den "can you watch him for me? I have to get Flamepaw cleaned up before their parents get back!"i explained, before running out.

I grabbed Flamepaw and dragged her around, finding a small pond and pushing her in. It was shallow enough for her to stand.

"Hey! What's your deal, man!?"She hissed.

"You're filthy! You're parents are going to kill me if they see you like this!"i growled.

Once she was clean I dragged her out of the water and back to camp. I sat her in the medecine den with her brother.

"Now, you two brats stay here with sakurabloom so I can clean up your mess! Understand!?" I hissed, storming out, starting to clean up firekit's mess.

When I returned it was as if I had never done anything. Amberpaw had gotten dirty again, and Firekit was back where he was but the den was a mess again.

"WHAT IN THE DARK FOREST HAPPENED HERE!?"Snarled splitstar. I spun around to see her and foxflame in shock at the entrance of camp.

The first thing they did was find us.

"Smoketrail we told you to watch them! what happened?" foxflame asked, much calmer than his mate.

Sakurabloom pushed past me with firekit.

"Listen up! Your little firekit here showed his tail in front of the whole clan! He made a complete fool of himself! He tore up everything, and now I have to try to find more herbs because he got to every single herb except for the poison! You *have* to punish him, splitstar!"She hissed.

"Yeah!" I chimed in "Flamepaw covered herself in mud and even after I cleaned her up and told her not to get dirty she did it again! Your kits need to be punished for their foolish actions!"

Foxflame sighed. Splitstar's eyes teared up. "I thought I was raising the perfect kits...I thought my kits were going to grow up to be the best they could...but I was wrong..."splitstar stormed out.

"Mother, wait! Please I can explain!"Flamepaw started to run after her, but foxflame knocked her back, pinning her down with a paw on her chest.

"Father, what are you doing?"Flamepaw hissed, starting to attempt to struggle out of his grip.

"I'm sorry, sweetheart, but if you two are going to act like fools, I'm sorry but I'm going to have to send you to the one place that I thought I would never have to....tonight I'm going to take you to rebelclan. I'll stay, but I will be gone by morning." foxflame meowed.

Flamepaw's eyes widened "No, please I'm sorry!"

Foxflame let her up. "Go say goodbye to your friends and your mother. You won't be seeing firekit anymore, he'll be going to rogueclan."

Rogueclan was the same thing, but it was for kits specifically, and that meant that the two wouldn't see each other again until firekit was an apprentice.

"Dad!? No please don't leave me there!"firekit begged.

But he had already made up his mind.

Chapter 9- Going Away

Flamepaw

I hate those stupid she-cat's that got me sent here. Do I really deserve it? Is what I did so bad that I had to be here? Mother and father seem to think so.

My father was walking by my side, saying something to me that I wasn't listening to.

Finally we reached the small camp. I was greeted by a tom who looked almost like Goldeneyes, but this tom was all white with amber freckles on his cheeks and nose.

"Flamepaw?" He asked.

My dad nodded.

" I'm SpeckledClaw. It's nice to meet you, Flamepaw. I'm the leader here, and I'm also going to be your mentor. Mentors here work much different than they do in the clan's. But I'm sure you'll do fine." The Tom meowed.

He stared at me hungrily.

The rest of the day was pretty calm except for one thing.

"Now, a physical evaluation. "

"A *what?* "

"We have to make sure that you aren't carrying anything. " SpeckledClaw explained further.

"I'm not allowing you to do that." My father hissed.

"Shut- I mean, don't worry, my sister will be doing it. She's the 'medecine cat' here. " the leader tom confirmed, motioning to a

identical she-cat who sat in a small den that looked like it was made by her. "Come on in"

She had a sweet kind voice.

I walked in, but when my father tried to follow me in, The she-cat stopped him."No toms allowed right now. "

He nodded, and the terrible of the sat outside.

I looked at her puzzled.

"I'm frecklepelt."She meowed. No duh.

"Nice to meet you, Frecklepelt." I meowed.

For a bit she asked questions, but then forced me to lay down so she could make sure everything was alright with me.

When we were done, she let the toms in.

"She's perfectly healty. Alright, I'll see you soon, then." She said to me.

I was going to ask what the medecine cat meant but was quickly lead out.

But finally it was time for sleep. I slept in a comfortable moss bed with,you father, but when I woke up that morning, he was gone.

"Wake up." Came SpeckledClaw's voice through my thoughts.

I got up, and he lead me to another paw-made den that smelled faintly of- I felt a huge wait land on me.

I shrieked, but my mouth was covered by a massive white paw.

Ripping. Bleeding. Pain. It's all i could feel.

Afterwards, A tired, and guilty looking tom collapsed next to me, staring into my Tearful eyes " im so sorry... I'm so so sorry...it's new-leaf. Do you know what that means...?."

I gulped down what felt like acidic bile.

"But..."he stood up and picked me up again. It happened. He did it again and again day after day. He said sorry, but this is all in reason why I hate others.

One day after it, he took me to the river. We sat on a tree branches. I was no longer Flamepaw by then. I was Flamestripe. And now...I'm not sure how or why, but I loved him. He hurt me so bad as a apprentice but it was all what I deserved for moons of ignorance and defiance.

I stared down at the water below and stood up.

He stood up too, a bit frantic looking " W-what are you doing...?" he asked nervously.

My expression went blank as I turned away from him and allowed myself to fall off of the branch.

Falling

Falling

Falling

Fell.

I died on impact. I knew, for as soon as I realized I missed the water I hit a rock, and no longer was able to see what I should of.

With the exception of a slight delay, I stood over my own limp, lifeless body.

SpeckledClaw had come down and was standing near me, but something was off. At the same time, he was covered in blood, laying next to me, a small smile on his face.

I looked up at the one standing with me "you....killed yourself....?....for...m-me....?" He held me tight "I did...."

Frecklepelt screamed. She saw her own brother die...right in her

face.

Not long after, my parents were here. My mother saw my body and crouched down next to me, yowling in agony "CURSE YOU STARCLAN!" She screamed, followed by mindless swears.

I stared at my mother as she cried and cried and sobbed over my death, Frecklepelt doing the same for SpeckledClaw. Father sat with mom, blankly staring. Suddenly, blood. He drove his claws into his throat.

He appeared next to me smiling. "It was hard to choose between you and your mother...but..,your mother can learn to live without you...and me.....I can't... I love you so much...." my Father pulled me to his chest.

We looked over at my mother who looked like she was going insane. But to our surprise, she went home.

But when she got there....slice. it wasn't her throat she slit, it was her clan's. She temporarily resigned as leader, to give her time to grieve for her family.

My family huddled around her, the kits.

I couldn't watch anymore. I had to look away. We returned to starclan. Where we should have been. But I soon realized I was alone.

"DADDY! SPECKLEDCLAW!? DADDY!? SPECKLEDCLAW!" I screamed.

"They are not here." Came a soft male voice. His eyes were blank white as well as his pelt, his fur like feathers.

"They have gone to the dark forest for their bad deeds that held no justification. " he said.

I fell to the ground "they killed themselves to be with me...but then...they are gone...."

Suddenly I'm drawn to the ground.

Smoketrail, the cat that had gotten me in trouble in the first place was being torn apart by my mom, but eventually stopped and pulled away.

Both were in raging tears.

They had both loved my dad so much in different ways. And punished so terribly. Just couldn't help but feel sorry for them.

I wished them luck.

Chapter 10-I can't do this

Splitstar

There's only so much one cat can handle. Loosing my daughter and mate in the same day put me at the end of the rope.

I had to temporarily resign.

There's no way I could lead my clan and grieve for my family all at once. It was way too much for me. My deputy- Novasky was to take my place for these few weeks or moons I would need to recover.

I didn't know what to do.

I can't do this.

"Splitstar." My deputy approaches me from behind, speaking and standing in a loyal professional posture and tone.

I turn to her, gaining the bit of my composure that wasn't scattered throughout the camp.

"Yes? What do you need?" I ask.

"I've just come to deliver my report. I suspect, however, that you will not be pleased...." Novasky murmurs.

The fur along my spine stands on end "What happened?"

"Angelwing is very sick. Sakurabloom and Vixenpaw give her a moon to live. There's nothing they can do without harming her kits. Not only that, but Bluekit is dying. With upcoming leaf-bare, herbs are going scarce to the frosts. It's too cold here. Sakurabloom is-" own int
"Sakurabloom is crying!" Shrieked Vixenpaw.

I had no idea when she had gotten there.

"What happened?" NovaSky hissed to the med cat apprentice.

"She had a vision. That's all she told me before she broke down into tears..." vixenpaw replied to the deputy obediently.

She didn't speak to me that way. She always spoke casually to me like I had told her to.

She lead us to the medicine den. There, sakurabloom was then huddled into a corner, rolled up into a ball of fur.

I slowly approached her.

I nudged her head to look at me. She was a weak and thin she-cat and didn't know how to fight even though she was short-tempered.

"What did you see? "

"An Eclipse. Starclan told me " sun and moon will collide and create stars, depart and fall. " the starclan ancestor then asked " Is the love in cats hearts stronger than their hate or their mate?" Then, she was gone"

By the time the poor thing finished, she was calmer.

I felt lost until I noticed Novasky tense up.

"What's wrong?" As soon as I ask this, cats rush in, all in a frenzied panic, most unable to calm down enough to speak so we just followed them to the nursery where Angelwing has begun her kitting.

No kits are being had yet, but her body is preparing.

I just stayed back quietly to watch sakueabloom work. She was also a cat in a frenzied panic almost.

She got the job done though...

Sakurabloom helped the she-cat birth two kittens.

They all died only minutes after birth. Angelwing did too.

The clan cats were in an uproar over this. They were outrage that she couldn't save any of them. I thought we had chilled them out.

Until I heard her yelp.

I rushed to her side. Her stomach was bleeding heavily, probably from a cat attacking her weak body.

She blacked out.

The next few moons were tragic.

It turned out, sakurabloom was expecting accidental kits. I had stupidly allowed her to have a mate, so I sort of blame myself for that.

Her kits were born dead from the attack. But two.

I allowed a couple leave the clan with the kittens.

The mother was devastated but understood.

I felt bad.

It began to snow heavily, and I had no mate or kits to huddle with.

"Splitstar? Are you alright?" That voice...

"No I'm not...I'm freezing..."
I felt sudden warmth wrap around me.

"Splitstar you shouldn't torture yourself like this, it's not good for you..."

"Specklepelt I'm fine, I-"
I felt his nose against my neck and moved my head, where he soon began to groom my messy fur.

I shivered. Foxflame didn't flirt like this before.

"Calm down, Split. I wouldn't dare touch you in a way you didn't

like. " The tom murmured, an almost hiss to his voice.

I frowned, and he caught the look in my eyes.

"Don't you trust Me?"

I turned onto my back to face him fully.

Immideately, his yellow eyes and my green ones locked together, and he smiled.

His black and Amber fur suddenly began to become speckled with snow, redirecting his attention to the outside.

I stood up once he moved away, and stood beside him.

"Snow?" I murmured.

"It's beautiful, but not good. I'll get Novasky to send out some hunting patrols. We don't know what might happen." Specklepelt replied.

I hesitated before nodding in agreement. He saw how I began to shiver and pressed his pelt to mine.

"You should go help Vixen and freckle with the queens and kits. I'll go help Smoketrail make a place to store the prey. If we don't do it now. It'll all freeze."

Without giving it another thought, my Ex mate padded off to the warriors den.

All of the dens were connected one way or another. The apprentice den and nursery are one, separated by thick brambles, but the cats could still get back and forth.

The medicine den was connected to the warriors den, separated by brambles also, but the medicine side was larger, since it now supported so many cats, including freckleface's kittens, that weren't born yet, but prevented her from being able to walk very long.

But she had to.

"Vixenpaw? Freckleface? Do you guys need any help?" I asked, entering the nursery, my eyes scanning over the queens and rambunctious kits, but almost immideately, my eyes were attracted to freckleface's slightly swollen belly.

Freckleface was vixenpaw's older sister, however she was a warrior, but she liked to help her sister and sakurabloom out when things got complicated.

Freckleface looked happy to see me "Splitstar! I'm glad to see you're doing better." She cheerfully meowed.

"Actually we need a lot of help!" Vixenpaw chimed in. She was near the entrance with materials at her paws. "Can you help me with this? It's a barrier to keep the queens warm and the kits inside. " she said.

I nodded, sitting with her. We managed to create the barrier successfully.

By the time we were done, Novasky's patrol was back with loads of prey.

I panted softly "finally....took long enough.."

Vixenpaw laughed softly.

"Looks good."

I jumped and spun around to the female voice behind me.

"Smoketrail, would you mind?" I growled in a harsh tone that startled the young warrior into hiding behind specklepelt.

he glared sharply at me and walked away with her.

"Did I do something wrong?" Their voices began to fade into the distance.

"I don't know, don't worry about it, alright?"

I sighed, looking up at the sky as the snow began to fall harder and

harder.

" Smoketrail, goldeneyes, freckleface, redtail, vixenpaw, aceclaw, Roughfang, and silentnose will leave for leaf-bare and return in new-leaf. The clan is overpopulated as is, and there won't be enough prey to feed them all soon... Effective...as soon as possible.."

Chapter 11- Cold And Hungry With Kits On The Way

Smoketrail

I don't know if I can say that we were kicked out, exiled, sent away, temporarily banned, I don't know, but we were definitely not in a good place.

Splitstar made us leave so that more food could be available.

Even in leaf-bare I wouldn't normally see too much problem except for one thing...

We had a queen with us.

Freckleface was definitely not too far from her due date. The snow was bad and there was no way that she could make it much farther before she couldn't go on anymore.

She was already limping, and endlessly whimpering and whining. She was starving and in a lot of pain. She would complain how it seemed like she could feel each kit slowly dying.

Goldeneyes had a strong worry that she wouldn't make it.

"Please..." she begged and we stopped to look back at her. She was shivering madly until she finally collapsed in the Snow.

"We have to stop here. There's nothing we can do. " Aceclaw hissed.

I nodded "brothers."

Silentnose and Roughfang stood at attention.

"I need to you guys and Aceclaw to scavenge. We need whatever we can get to build a den. Hunt whatever you can find. Go now. We can't wait much longer." I snapped.

The three younger warriors scattered.

I looked back to freckleface.

Her mostly white face was flushed red, and she was breathing very heavily.

I looked up at vixenpaw "What's wrong with her? Do you know?"

Vixen nodded "she's exausted, starving, sore...smoketrail...I don't think she'll make it through this....She has the same sickness that Angelwing did....We have to do something or else we'll lose her..."

I nodded an looked at goldeneyes "Baby, try to clear some snow. My paws feel numb..." I meowed softly.

Goldeneyes nodded. He was used to freezing pads, so he didn't mind that much and began to clear the snow from around us.

"I can't go on like this..." freckleface whimpered.

"No way in the darkforest can we let her die! Redtail-!"

I freeze before looking back to where goldeneyes had been standing, however he was now near a bush. I gasped softly, quickly glancing around the mostly empty space around me.

"You couldn'do it, huh?"

"S-shut up." Goldeneyes hissed, but I could even hear the flusterdness in his voice.

This made freckleface giggle in a slightly raspy voice.

Vixenpaw smiled "don't worry, freckleface...the others will be back soon, and we'll get you nice and warm, hopefully with some fresh food and water, alright? Just hang in there."

....

My brothers and Aceclaw took a long time. As soon as they got close, silentnose collapsed to the ground, Scarlett blood staining the

white snow.

Roughfang drug him over to me "he accidently touched Aceclaw in the wrong way and she clawed his face, chest, belly, and....uhm..."

I got the hint and nodded.

I looked at Aceclaw who was quietly tearing up. I was about to open my mouth when Redtail covered my mouth with his paw and whispered in my ear "she's sensitive...besides...." he trailed off

I flinched as if someone had scared me again.

She couldn't be like this now of All times.

"You're kidding right...?" I murmured nervously.

He uncovered my mouth and shook his head "she's acting strange." He pointed out.

He explained to me what he meant.

She waved her tail high in the air, as well as rubbing up against things, including the young Toms.

She brushed her tail under Roughfang's nose and he bit her tail making her shriek.

From both sides a tom tackled him, silentnose on one, redtail on the other, Goldeneyes from behind.
I glanced at Vixenpaw "they'll rip each other to shreds. I'll let 'em. We can't deal with her being a queen...."

Vixenpaw nodded "she's old enough, and very tough for a petite cat like herself, but with her leg all messed up, she might hurt herself even more."

"But..."

The fur on my neck stood.

"We're too late."

I shrieked in surprise and spun around. She was right.

Roughfang had Aceclaw pinned, her scruff trapped between his jaws, the three other Tom's defeated, groaning in pain. He hadn't hurt them too bad, but he definitely showed them what for.

They took the walk of shame back to us.

I gave all three a cuff on the ear.

"Control yourselves!" I hissed at red and golden.

Their ears pinned to their heads.

"Sorry...I couldn't help it..."

Redtail whimpered to accompany goldeneyes' shameful mew.

Even freckleface had the energy to scoff at her mate.

After a while of fighting I heard ace and rough drop into the snow.

Ace locked eyes with me, that same shameful look on her face.

Roughfang on the other hand was panting like a twoleg dog, having been unable to control himself either, he had yet to come back to his senses.

"Looks like we'll have another queen to feed..!" Redtail snapped, bringing Roughfang back to reality.

He lacked the energy to stand and confront the tom.

"You idiots just had to go on and do it didn't you?! Do you know what you've done?! You've just made our lives harder! Queens eat more than three of us alone!"

Roughfang finally stood and came nose to nose with Redtail and they began to fall out and argue. Then it got physical, as the two began to bite scratch and tumble.

Aceclaw burst into tears, as did freckleface as their mates fought each other.

In the end....it didn't turn out well.

Roughfang stood over Redtail, his claws piercing his neck.

"Roughfang that's enough, we can't risk it! We can't let you kill Him!"

The words seemed to ring in the sudden silence.

Roughfang's legs gave out and he fell too.

Vixenpaw gasped.

Rough was bleeding from his lower body, a large slash diagonally across his body, and he was losing blood fast.

Redtail was badly hurt, but rather than bleeding he was knocked out from a hit to his head.

Vixenpaw was speechless.

She rushed around everywhere. It took long for her to stop the bleeding.

He was dying. I now realized that.

Chapter 12- Survived

We managed to construct a den large enough for all of us plus some extra space. Thankfully we had found food and Vixen had found a few herbs.

I laid curled up with goldeneyes happily.

"Uughhh.." freckleface groaned.

"Vixenpaw....." she continued endlessly.

I got up "freckleface? Is something wrong?" I frantically asked.

Freckleface nodded "I need vixenpaw...I feel...I feel sick....where is she..?"
I flinched and looked around the large den. "I....don't know..."

She shrieked in agony "find her!"

I ran for the entrebce of the den, and stumbled and looked down. I had forgotten for those few moments of panic about the toms.

All of them were curled up together, with the one month pregnant queen- Aceclaw.

Then there was the empty spot between her and silentnose where Vixenpaw had been sleeping the night before.

I growled as the apprentice entered the den.

I spun on my paws to face her, and she stepped back and dropped the bundle of herbs, immideately taking the hint " I'm so sorry!"

"Why would you leave without us knowing!? Or on your own?! You could have gotten hurt, attacked, or what if frecklewish had her kits? We don't know what to do!"

"I said I'm sorry!"

"Sorry doesn't fix anything! We needed you and you weren't Here!" I snapped.

I raised my paw and slashed at her face, she instinctively crouched when I raised my paw again.

I sliced up her back and sides and face as if it were nothing.

She shrieked and cried until the Tom's woke up. It took both of my brothers and goldeneyes to pull me backwards with enough force to keep me back. I felt someones tongue on my cheek but relaxed when I realized it was goldeneyes.

I calmed down slowly and then looked up at him.

Vixenpaw was cowering in fear in the corner.

Goldeneyes' tail brushed up against my body, and I sighed.

I finally fully relaxed into him, allowing him to take me over, just enough to keep me calm.

"I love you." Goldeneyes purred softly into my ear.

I purred back at him.

"You cool now?"

I nodded, and he loosened his grip on me. " Why did you hurt her?" He asked.

"She worried the hell out of me, when I couldn't find her. And Freckleface started to get stomach pains, and I was scared....it just pissed me off..."

I heard redtail sigh "luckily, Aceclaw is still asleep. But her leg seems to be getting worse."

On the journey to where we were now, Aceclaw got caught in a small rock slide and her leg got hurt.

We weren't able to do anything but put it in a weak sling that gave

out after just A few days, so that she now was forced to walk with a fractured leg.

She would cry all night when we traveled, but now that we were pretty settled down, she seemed to be In less pain thanks to vixenpaw, who practically nearly over dosed her with stuff for the pain, just so that she wouldn't complain and cry all night.

So Aceclaw no longer cried or complained at night. She was mostly sleeping or eating or something, not wanting to be very active.

There was nothing right or good about drugging the queen into oblivion but it kept everyone in place.

Then there was roughpaw...

Vixen couldn't stitch up his wounds and just bandaged them, and they aren't healing, so if he moves too much it begins to bleed.

That's pretty bad considering that even after a moon, him and redtail still fight and argue, and it always gets physical fast, when they start to almost kill one another.

It's stupid, I know, but maybe it wouldn't be if they would just talk to us about it.

But the two of them have always been so reserved when it comes to things like this. They just don't seem to really like telling people about their problems.

But if I need to, I'll force them.

I jumped a bit in momentary panic when I heard freckleface begin to whimper and groan again.

I turned to them quickly, and the first thing that caught my eye was the panic on vixenpaw's face when she turned away from the queen.

I knew what that meant.

The kits were coming.

We dashed into the den in a hurry. Even after waiting for a little while, she was still not here. Did she....did she just flake on us out of fear...?

I rushed to freckleface's side, gently pressing on her belly, telling her to breath and push. It was bloody but successful, despite the fact that freckleface had passed out.

By the time vixenpaw had returned with the herbs that I would have needed for freckleface, freckleface was awake again, seven kits suckling at her belly.

"I...."

I glared up at the apprentice from where a laid with freckleface.

I heard the Tom's shuffle behind me and knew they were pretty pissed off, too.

"Where in *STARCLAN* were you!? " Redtail growled, padding up to her.

"How could you leave like that, right when you knew frecklewish was about to have her kits!?" Goldeneyes hissed, now, the Tom's had her surrounded on one side.

Rough and quiet appeared on the other side.

She stood there speechless.

"I-I'm sorry...I got scared..."

"Scared....? How do you think you would feel if *you* were about to bring kits into the world, but the one who actually knows what she's doing got *scared!?* I should be the one *SCARED* vixenpaw! I could have died!" Freckleface snapped.

"I know...just punish me already..."

"I'm going to drop some truth on you. This will be punishment enough. If you do this again when Aceclaw has her kits in two moons, I will not hesitate to kick you out. "

"But...won't it be new-leaf by then?"

"Yes, but we are not going back to that place. No way."

Vixen nodded.

"What did chu sayz about me....?" Aceclaw yawned.

Roughpaw padded over to her and curled up around Aceclaw. "Don't worry about it, ace. It's fine. Just go back to sleep..."

Aceclaw shook her head "No more sleeping. I'm tired of sitting here sleeping."

She stood up, shaking and keeping her wounded paw off the ground. "I'm tired of just sitting here! I want to do something!" She hissed, putting all four paws on the floor.

I sighed and hissed "no."

She staggered back and fell backwards into her mate. "Why..,why not....?"

"You're a queen, your already hurt, and you're getting too full of yourself. Don't ask me again." I snapped swiftly.

As I turned away, I heard her start to cry.

I knew she heard me *tsk* at her by the way she shut up for a moment then cried more.

"Smoketrail what has gotten into you....?" Goldeneyes asked, concerned but in a sort of hiss.

"Nothing." I said, finally, and left the den. I stood there for a while before rushing over to a bush, beginning to throw up, constantly.

I hated this.

Chapter 13- Secrets

Me and goldeneyes don't normally keep secrets from each other, but this was something I couldn't tell him.

I hated doing this again. It scared me into keeping it a secret.

He would worry and him and redtail would end up in a fight. I didn't want that.

I returned to the den, immideately feeling sick again, and dashed off to throw up.

But this time I was followed.

"You're hiding something, aren't You?" I hear vixenpaw's voice as she comes up beside me.

I stand straight to look at the scrawny apprentice. "No."

She shoves me to the ground, and before I can give my own personal reaction, instinct kicks in, and I curl up slightly, the only thing that I can think about now is protecting my self from an expected attack.

I hiss at her and she flinches a bit then says "you're expecting again. Aren't You?"

I sigh. I am defeated "fine...I am, so what?"

She frowns "why would you keep it a secret!? Why do you eat so little?"

"I....I've never....I don't trust myself with having kits anymore....after my first litter....I don't know why I did this to myself.."

Of course vixenpaw had to ask "what happened?"

"Two were sick at birth, one died that day....the other stayed sick

for a long time...my daughter splitkit died the day your sister was born. She was trapped underneath a burning branch by my Ex-mate....once my kit hopekit got better from being sick, my other kit emberkit began roughhousing her, eventually mostly accidentally killing her, brutally....."

I stopped there.

"What about emberkit?" She asked.

"I killed her.....I was so furious that she had killed hopekit...hopekit was defenseless and harmless....I just...couldn't take it..."

Vixenpaw shuddered.

"Sorry...did I scare You?" I asked softly.

She nodded slightly.

I laughed nervously.

"Well, since we're out here, you can help me gather materials, so that we can keep Freckleface's kits warm. " vixenpaw suggested.

I nodded, a bit reluctantly.

For a long while we collected herbs, moss, leaves, feathers, anything useful, and brought them back.

Freckleface was silent. She was normally quite quiet but nothing like this.

"Guys?"

Then I noticed, the six kits, hanging limp, two in each Tom's mouth except for roughpaw who was curled up with Aceclaw.

"Oh starclan what happened...?" Vixenpaw murmured.

"We don't know...they were fine before you left...but they're ice cold..." goldeneyes replied.

"They froze to death..." I murmured. So quickly?

Freckleface began to sob, holding her surviving kit close.

"He's precious. Don't worry, it'll be all right. He'll be fine." I then tried to reassure her.

Aceclaw began to scream and yowl her voice cracking in agony.

Vixenpaw rushed to her side. All she did was brush aceclaw's leg with her paw, and Aceclaw snapped, scratching her leg with a hiss.

Roughfang had to wrestle Aceclaw to the floor to keep her still.

"Please stop it! It hurts, please stop!" Aceclaw screeched.

"Calm down, she's just trying to help you.." roughfang growled softly.

Vixenpaw padded over to Aceclaw, and set down poppy seeds, wrapped in some type of herbs.

"No! I don't wanna-!"

Before Aceclaw could finish her protest, roughclaw and vixenpaw force fed her.

In minutes she was out of it, talking nonsense and slurring her words until she fell asleep.

"We can't keep doing this, it might kill the kits..." vixenpaw murmured.

"I'm worried. We can't get close enough to riverclan to get the comfrey root. Plus it's too far. By the time we get it and get back, she'll be in too much pain, and it'll take time to find the herbs we need to knock her out."

I sighed. I hated how the little she-cat could be more logical than us.

"Its almost new-leaf. We should be able to return next gathering..." freckleface meowed weakly.

"Ace would still be pregnant, thank God. We can't deal with more kits...." vixenpaw murmured.

"Two moons, guys...no she won't, idiot." I hissed.

Freckleface flicked her tail dismissively.

Vixenpaw grumbled.

Goldeneyes sighed "leave her alone. Just chill out everyone it's been a long day." He meowed softly.

I rubbed my head on his chest and purred "Oh fine."

He smiled, licking me on the head. "Let's all just rest for a while." He added.

I laid down in the nest I shared with him, and he layed with me.

Vixenpaw laid down in a nest in a corner since freckleface and redtail shared a nest.

I slowly drifted off to sleep.

....I

I'm awake. Where is everyone?

The den is empty so I go outside.

I look down and notice a trail of blood in the melting snow.

I follow it to fortress.

But fourtrees is desolate.

I looked around "goldeneyes!? Freckleface!? Redtail!?" I call.

I hear distant giggling.

It sounds like a kits voice.

I follow the voices to the thunderpath.

"Hey you."

I'm greeted by three kits

One Amber with a white chest, like freckleface's son.

One with ashy colored fur

One with a tortoiseshell fur pattern, similar to Aceclaw*'s calico pelt.*

Their voices were monotone and creepy as they spoke to me in unison.

I glance around nervously.

"Come on. Let's play." They meowed. They all began to slowly pad over to the center of a thunderpath.

"Come on, ***mommy*** *. It'll be fun."*

I flinched, hearing that word, that came from the ash-gray kit's mouth.

I shuddered.

"I'm not your mommy. I'm not." I replied.

"You're...not...? You don't...want me...?" The kit asked.

I shook my head quickly " my kits are dead, my kits are-"

I paused and looked down.

I didn't have a kitten belly anymore.

When I looked up, all I saw was blinding lights.

Monster.

I instinctively darted into the monsters way, immideately being knocked off the path, and I looked up.

I see three dead kits and blood on my paws.

The monster swerved trying to avoid a fourth white kit that had been

standing away from the others. Missed her but hit me.

As soon as it touched my nose-

I open my eyes, breathing heavy and sweating.

Something isn't right.

It's not freezing cold.

It's warm.

I look around.

Kits.

Three of them.

Huh?

I looked down.

Pregnant still.

How is that even possible?

I look around.

Aceclaw is..awake And not in pain. Her leg is Still off the ground.

Freckleface was active again, playfully roughhousing with two kits. Her own kit, that I don't recall hearing the name of, and two more kits.

Aceclaw wasn't expecting anymore.

I sat up, and goldeneyes came up from my right with a small thrush "you look like you're about to be sick. You alright?"

I was silent.

"Last I remember...there was only one, few hours old kit...what happened?"

"Strange." Goldeneyes replied.

I stood and padded over to freckleface and the kits.

Freckleface looked up at me with gleaming eyes.

One kit looked up at me.

Two of them didn't.

Freckleface smiled and mewed

"Get ready, we're going home today."

Chapter 14- How Could He?

Freckleface's son was named rascalkit

Apparently, the other two *were* ace's kits.one was blind, the other fine.

The blind one was Snowykit, the other one wildkit.

Wilf was female, snowy was male, but despite being so different they got along and got around just fine.

I padded near the entrance of the den but stopped dead in my tracks when I heard Roughfang and redtail talking with vixenpaw just outside.

I paused to eavesdrop on them.

"Do you think the kits can make the trip back to fourtrees?" Roughfang asked.

"And what about Aceclaw? She's afraid to use her leg even though it's healed." Redtail added.

"You're right. We'll have to see how it goes. Go get them and we'll head out." Vixenpaw replied.

redtail walked back into the den, and ran into me, knocking us both the the ground, and he landed on top of me.

"Redtail!" I shrieked as we came nose to nose.

Redtail stood up, slowly backing off "I'm sorry, I am so sorry.." he quickly meowed, helping me up.

I smiled nervously and licked his ear "it's fine, retail, don't worry about it. You didn't do anything on purpouse."

We left that night.

The kits were rambunctious and wild.

When we reached the thunderpath, I allowed everyone go ahead of me, and walked beside snowykit.

He began to lag behind and I didn't realize it until I got to the other side.

He was chasing a beautiful white butterfly.

I wasn't worried until I heard goldentail yell "monster! Get him!"

I was first to move, immideately running and grabbing the kit, but I was too scared.

I froze in the headlights of the monster.

Then i felt nothing.

The only other thing I remember his hitting the ground, and tasting blood. It silently worried me that I couldn't tell if it was mine or Blizzardkit's.

I woke up, to a headache and many voices.

I looked up into the face of a black, grey, and brown she-cat.

"Oh my starclan she's awake." The she-cat meowed, her voice sounding relieved.

I sat up weakly.

"Stand back. She looks confused." Meowed a young cat with fur that was similar to a fox.

"Hey, what's your name?" She asked me.

"U-uhm...my name...?" I replied.

"My name...my name is...uhm...my name is uhm...my name is..uh..,,my name is S-smoke...my name is smoketrail.." I stammered.

The she-cat frowned.

"Who am I?" She asked.

I looked around then back at her "I don't know..." I said quietly.

"I'm Vixenpaw. You don't remember? I'm the Shadowclan medicine cat apprentice." The cat replied.

I looked to the cat that had been there when I first woke up.

"Who are you...?" I asked.

She looked at another cat who nodded, then another who smiled and nodded.

Then she looked back at me "I'm your mother. My name is Adderstar of windclan." She said.

"But, your current home is shadowclan. I'm splitstar, the shadowclan leader." Said the cat that had smiled at my mom. She had a precise V shape cut deep into one of her ears.

"I want to take her home with me..please? " My mom meowed.

"You can't!" Cried a tom with bright, golden eyes.

"Its up to our mother and splitstar!" Hissed a tom about my age.

I stared at the golden-eyed tom.

He slowly approached me. He put his paw on mine.

"Smoketrail, please say you remember me....I'm your mate, Goldeneyes." He purred.

He licked me on the cheek and I aggressively shoved him away "stop it! I don't know you, creep!" I hissed, and he shot back, bursting into tears.

My mom rested her tail on my shoulder. "Honey, please calm down...."

I nodded.

But I continued to stare into the Tom's eyes until it finally clicked.

Everyone was watching me. The attention made me blush, but what caught my eye was a tom looking at me, with a smile as bright as his eyes.

He had golden-looking light ginger fur and amber eyes, that seemed almost gold also.

He smiled.

I smiled back.

On the way to shadowclan-i guessed- he told me

*" **I'm Goldeneyes** ."*

"I'm smoketrail."

We stopped. No one was around us anymore.

"Yeah I noticed."he meowed sarcastically.

I laughed "yeah, the whole forest probably knows it by now."

We talked casually until Goldeneyes tackled me into the underbrush.

I gasped softly.

"I remember...goldeneyes...when I became a warrior...his eyes distracted me...We fell in love almost instantly..."

Goldeneyes smiled "what did I say that made you laugh?" He asked.

" You said....uhm... "Yeah, I noticed" very sarcastically...." I answered. "Then I said "the whole forest probably knows it by now" I think..."

"We talked some more. Then, I did this:" goldeneyes started before tackling me to the ground, one paw on my belly.

I winced. I looked down at my belly as blood began to drop from my mouth.

I hissed in pain as I was hit with a huge headache.

"I jumped in front of a car to save a kit. He died. Right? When we got hit, he died on impact..." I cried.

My eyes flew open, landing on two young Tom's.

They watched me, their eyes watering.

"I'm Roughfang. He's silentnose. You have to remember us." Said the darker one.

I shook my head "no..."

His expression turned aggressive, and when he started to pad over to me I began to back away. "G-Go away..." I mewed helplessly.

I squeaked, feeling his claws slash my belly repeatedly. Even when he had me pinned to the ground he wouldn't stop.

Then i realized something horrible.

I don't remember how to fight.

I closed my eyes trying to remember.

I raised my paw and slashed at a she-cats face. Vixenpaw's face. she instinctively crouched when I raised my paw again.

I sliced up her back and sides and face as if it were nothing.

She shrieked and cried until the Tom's woke up. It took the Tom's that I recognized now as Roughfang and quietnose , and goldeneyes to pull me backwards with enough force to keep me back.

I smirked.

Claws.

I slashed at his face and he howled, pausing long enough for me to

kick him off.

But when I looked up at him, he smiled.

"You remember how you fight." He explained when he saw my confused expression.

I looked around "mom, I'm scared...I..i wanna go home..." I cried softly.

Adderstar padded up beside me and nuzzled my ear "it's fine, honey, just relax. Just try to remember the best you can. Don't stress yourself."

I nodded.

Goldeneyes laid down next to me, licking my wounds gently. I loved him. I don't know why I loved him. Was it the way his eyes put me in a trance?

Maybe I'll find out.

I watched my mom speaking to the clans.

Suddenly goldeneyes stopped licking me and began to hiss as another cat approached.

The cat had white fur and blue eyes.

Iceglare

I don't remember him but the name flashed in my head. I stood up. "Iceglare." I meowed.

The tom sneered, shoving goldeneyes away, and licking my neck in a pervertive way.

"Goldeneyes is just your ex, I'm your real mate." He purred.

I looked at goldeneyes "really?"

"No!" Goldeneyes hissed. "He's your ex. You left him when you came to shadowclan. "

I started to cry.

What was wrong with me..?

Chapter 15- Amnesia

They told me I had amnesia.

I told them I wanted to go home with my mom, but instead, she stepped down as leader to stay with me in shadowclan. She told me that she didn't want iceglare around me anymore.

Why?

I kinda liked shadowclan. However my mom and splitstar did fight often over my condition.

Many cats would yell at me.

Upset me.

Lie to me.

Just to be jerks.

I hated them. Some of them were terrible cats.

I still didn't remember anyone else.

They tried showing me things to help me remember.

They tried to make me remember Vixenpaw and freckleface mostly.

They showed my the nursery, the medicine cat den, the warriors den but none of them helped.

But later when it was just me exploring on my own, it just..

Clicked.

Everything around me is burning.

A queen is trapped under the den which was caving in. She was protecting a kit. This kit was white with a face freckled with Amber.

"Save her. If I don't make it out it doesn't matter just take my kit!" The queen cried.

I nodded, grabbed the kit as the roof of the den finally collapsed on the queen.

But I made it out alive. With the kit in my jaws.

I staggered backwards.

" Smoketrail? Are you okay?" I just now realize that freckleface is standing directly in front of me.

All of a sudden I blurt out "I know this is random, but I'm sorry that I couldn't save both of you on the night of the fire.."

Freckleface began to tear up. She touched noses with me " You remember....You remember what happened...You remember me..." She said quietly.

I nodded.

"My mom died. My dad found a new mate and had Vixenpaw. She's my half-little-sister." Freckleface explained.

I nodded.

I looked around. This place was pretty big actually.

Nice.

"Miss Smoketrail come play with us!" A kit squealed up at me.

She was barely bigger than by head.

Awwwwwww

I picked her up, smothering her in my fur.

So cute! So soft!

She squealed "ack! Stoooop! Mommy help!" She shrieked and I released her, setting herdown.

A young warrior approached me.

"Sorry about Wildkit. She can be a bit over dramatic.." she murmured, laughing nervously.

"Am not!" The kit argued.
I smiled. How cute.

The pretty sleek she-cat picked up the messy kit by her scruff and returning her to her lace in the nursery.

Suddenly something struck me.

Kits. Pain. Wait, Pain ?

I collapsed, watching the blood looking beneath me, it's Scarlett color staining the grass as well as my pelt.

No... No No no it can't be...

I groaned and shriek, alerting Some cats who rushed to me, GoldenEyes one of them.

"This can't be happening....I'm not going to lose them am I?" I asked urgently as they carefully took me to the medicine cat den.

"They're not gonna die are they? They're going to be fine, right? " I continued, my voice cracking with sorrow. My mate shared my expression, and I looked deep into his eyes and suddenly...

Everything came flooding back to me.

Chapter 16- Again

"Freckleface"
"Vixenpaw"
"Wildkit!"
"Adderstar"
"Splitstar"
"Sakurabloom"
"Hopekit! Emberkit!Splitkit"
"Aceclaw! Roughfang! Silentnose!"
"Iceglare! Sunsetstreak!"
"Redtail!"
The names flew from my mouth so fast it was a blur of words as the memories flooded my mind.

A reddish colored she-cat looked up at me with wide watery eyes. "Smoketrail, I'm glad you came. This is vixenkit." She meowed, gently nudging a tiny reddish brown kit with her nose .

A beautiful queen with charred fur watched me carefully. "Take frecklekit and go!"

I saw nothing but darkness, but heard shuffling and cries around me. Then the voice of what seemed to be another angry she-cat. "Adderstar! You promised you would give them to us!" The angry cat hissed. "Can I at least say goodbye? Please? They're my kits...."

"This is what you get!" The voice of my first born rang in my head as well as the accompanying screams of my lastborn kit.
"IM SORRY!"

"Well that's sad...," the abrupt mew of kit iceglare sounded from behind me.

"I look strange... I am strange...why can't I be normal?" The doubtful mew of my first-to-die kit came from the small chimera kit in front of me.

" My name is Splitscar. I'm the new deputy. Hollowtail's death is a shame... She lied to us about her health with all that reckless fighting she did." The calm kind voice of the leader sounding.

"Not funny sis!" The body of my younger littermate squirmed beneath me. My quiet little brother nodded in agreement to the other. I giggled "oh come on, roughkit Toughen up!"

"What happened?" The beautiful black and white medicine cat asked, cocking her head. "Sakurabloom... I hurt my leg....." I whimpered. "Oh smokepaw..."

I found myself gently eyeing a fire-pelted tom with a burn on one side of his face, talking up frecklepaw, his eyes glimmering with charm. "Take care of her, Redpaw!" I called playfully.

A messy-furred kit stared up into my eyes "play!" She sqeaked. " Wildkit it's time for your nap!" Aceclaw called , and the small kit returned to her mother, curling up and falling asleep as h er m other hummed her a soft tune.

I looked up and around, gawking at the sight of the four large trees surrounding the clearing and the leaders sitting atop the great rock. Suddenly something taps me lightly on my shoulder and I turn around to look.
"Smoketrail, this is my little sister, sunsetstreak. She's actually from another clan." Goldeneyes meowed, and I found myself staring down into round amber-gold eyes that belonged to a she-cat not much older than an apprentice.

Then finally two familiar voices hit my mind.

I snuck around to the apprentice den, peeking in, and caught my older brothers in a dark conversation. "My mate is dead, ruffledpaw, I have nothing else to be here for!"
"Stop being so insensitive, Twitchpaw! What about smokepaw?" Ruffledpaw hissed back.
" She's going to die, that's What !"

My eyes flew open, and I was surrounded. One side darkness, one side light, but where I stood was nothing but air.

"Smoketrail." I jumped and looked to my light side.

" The fire will burn higher and the smoke will rise and Reach the top as the water attempts to put it out for good. And when the smoke finally ceases to rise, the embers of its fire will live on." Meowed a strange white she-cat with Crystal eyes.

"Fire? What Fire?" I asked frantically, but light flashed in my eyes and I was back. But by now I was no longer in pain.

Goldeneyes licked me on the head. "I'm so sorry we couldn't save them..." he murmured, licking my cheek affectionately.

Even though I should have been upset about the loss of my kits I felt too much confusion. *Fire?* The words of the she-cat spin in my head making a shiver run down my spine but instead I shook out my fur.

Suddenly, my mind returns to thinking about kits and I ask "How's freckleface doing? She must have been upset about her kit's sudden death..."

"I'm doing fine. I've been thinking about his death alot. He was my first kit of my first litter. My other kits had died after a few hours of birth." Came freckleface's voice from outside the den.

I smiled. "Oh that's what happened...but for the record, how old is wildkit and rascalkit?" I asked.

"Hm? You haven't met rascalkit yet. "

"Yes I have! I was there at his birth! " I snapped fiercely.

She didn't respond for a moment but then meowed "I know. " before leaving the den "three moons. "She added as she dissapeared from view.

"You-" started my mate but I cut him off first. "I remember now. I remember almost everything, but one thing still is shaking me..."

Goldeneyes cocked his head curiously "What is It?"

"Adderstar is my *mother?"*

Goldeneyes laughed gently, his voice slightly broken with tears. "Well yes..I was a bit shocked about that too. I mean, after that gathering where you came to shadowclan I would have never guessed."

I blinked a bit, still not believing it myself.

"Sorry." Adderstar meowed as she walked in as if knowing that we were talking about her.

A small ginger kit padded beneath her.

"She's been following me all day, I'm so confused!" She meowed, laughing nervously. The kit mewed.

"Oh yeah, she doesn't have any parents..." I muttered.

Adderstar flicked her ear.

"Her mother died after giving birth to her. Her father became mates with splitstar, then killed himself after their daughter and her mate committed suicide."

"Would you...mind if...if I kept her?" Adderstar asked quietly.

I looked up at her, surprised. "You're not afraid of not getting to watch her-"

"No I just...I just want to feel like a mother again. That's all...after I had to give you away, nothing could really fill that void of no longer having my kits with me. Even though I could see you when I wanted, Dawntail stopped letting me, and sooner or later, you were tossed from her life like nothing more than crowfood, and there was nothing I could do becuase- because, well I wasn't your mother anymore...."

I sighed. "then why?"

"why...? Why what..?"

"why did you give me up to her...? Why would you give me up to a cat like her? Didn't you know what she was capable of?" I meowed, beginning to raise my voice without really noticing it.

"I..I didn't know....back then she was so agressive towards me, and she threatened my position as leader, but at least...at least she's dead now, and I can finally have my kits back. I promise never to leave you again..."

"wait, she's-" I glanced at her paws, stained with scarlet blood.

"*you.....*"

A/N

ooo cliffhangers! I love torturing you guys with cliffhangers between updates, have a good day~

Chapter 17- Retaliation

" She brought down my lives one by one. I still have three lives left, though. If she was going to keep doing what she was doing, she would have had to die first anyway. I couldn't let her be leader. Not over my dead body." Adderstar hissed.

Her body was trembling as she wore a sick smile on her face with wide eyes. Her claws unsheathed into the ground.

I stood up and narrowed my eyes. "You're a psycho. Your kits have forgotten about you. It's sad that you've done this out of jealousy, and sad where you will end up." I meowed sorrowfully, and slashed at her neck.

Adderstar sputtered and staggered back. "How dare you!?" She snapped, stumbling before she collapsed to the ground.

I glanced around at the shocked faces. I padded forward and stood over her, watching as she lost her life. This time from the chest up, and again straight across.

I stood there for a bit. It soon occurred to me that she had no more lives left. There was no more adderstar. Who was leader now?

I glanced around again. Everyone looked absolutely terrified.

Peachkit watched me, petrified. Blood stained her tiny fluffy paws, for she was standing in a puddle of blood. She started to cry.

She didn't understand what was going on.

I sighed deeply. I reached over and picked her up, and she didn't mind, clinging fearfully to my pelt. I entered the nursery and ignored everyone but the kit in my jaws. I laid down and her Amber eyes stared right into mine, sparkling with tears.

I licked her clean, then myself.

"What...happened to you?" Aceclaw asked, her tail resting over her kit to prevent her from seeing...*this*.

"You'll find out soon enough." I meowed, my words ominous but my voice calm.

"Alright..." the queen murmured. Wildkit's eyes were wide with excitement as she bounded over to me, Rascalkit coming over from the other direction.

Peachkit watched them, then sunk back into my fur.

"Sorry, I don't think Peachkit wants to play right now." I purred to them gently. Judging by their names, you wouldn't know that they weren't related until they stood beside their parents.

Rascalkit looked like and acted like Redtail most of the time, though he earned his mother's suddenly dangerous temper. He's normally pretty nice but also a daredevil, and dangerous when angry.

Wildkit looked mostly like her mother, but the markings on her face and paws were dusty brown rather than grey. She had Roughfang's wild spirit considering her name, and her mother's pelt and way she carries herself and handles things.

They were both the only survivors of their litter, since they were born in a harsh extended leafbare.

"Why not?" Wildkit huffed.

"Wildkit, leave her alone. Rascalkit, you too." Aceclaw meowed sternly.

In my mind the words of that starclan cat rang in my head. Fire? Smoke? Water? Embers? What does any of this mean?

I guessed I would find out soon enough.

The two kits flattened their ears and left the nursery.

"Are they gone?" Peachkit asked softly, making me jump.

"Yes, they went to play outside." I replied gently. "Now, we've had a long day, let's get some rest, ok?" I asked softly.

Peachkit curled up in my paws and purred.

Though asleep I eventually felt goldeneyes lay next to me, and heard redtail's shuffling to get past Imeand Aceclaw, and Roughfang's quiet murmuring.

I felt Peachkit purring all throughout the night as I drifted though my dreams.

What woke me up was a huge weight on my back paws. I snapped awake and noise filled my ears. Between my paws, Peachkit was crying and wailing, and the toms were nowhere to be found.

Aceclaw was huddling with wildkit, and freckleface was passed out, rascalkit throwing a coughing fit, though he refused to leave her alone.

The entrance to the den was collapsed with no way to get out. Paws from the outside were scrambling at the dirt and sticks, breaking through just enough to get through.

Aceclaw grabbed rascalkit and wildkit and rushed out. I picked up Peachkit and squeezed through just before it all came down again.

The air was thick with black smoke, flames licking at the trees and everything else.

Trying to exit camp, my path was blocked. The white Tom's pelt was messy with ashes, his deep ocean blue eyes narrowed on me.

"Iceglare...did you do this...?" I asked.

"No." I jumped and spun around. Before me, a tom, his fur pure white. His icy blue eyes locking onto mine. "Ah. Smoketrail." He purred.

The ashy furred tom padded over to stand beside him.

"This is my kit."

I flinched. This monster had kits? "I..."

"I'm Waterpaw. Nice to meet you-" the light gray tom purred, cut off by his father who nipped his ear, making him squeak.

"in any case, he set the fire. And by the way..."

They began to pad off, but iceglare stopped to turn back to me.

" It's Icestar now."

Chapter 18- Hellfire

iceSTAR? This can't be happening! My mind whirled as my mind raced. Who could his mate possibly be after all the things he's done? Then something came to mind.

"My name is Waterpaw. It's nice to meet you." When he spoke I heard a quiet dinging. A bell. A *kittypet!* Iceglare had kits with a female kittypet. Without a doubt, that's where the rest of his kits were.

I had a plan.

I'd find his mate and bring her here. Maybe that could convince him to stop his crazy reign over the clans. I flinched, feeling the heavy breathing of the cats around me. I glanced down at Peachkit, wildkit, and rascalkit, all cowering in fear by my paws.

"Lets get out of here. We can find your parents later when it's safe. We'll probably be joining windclan for a while. at least until we can recover the camp...." I mumbled and lead the kits down to fortrees.
gruesome
I looked around and instantly spotted Redtail, approaching him and freckleface. "Is he okay?" I asked, looking at the burns obscuring his face. "Blinded." Freckleface said softly, gently licking redtail's cheek. He purred but didn't speak. I was about to ask more questions before freckleface spoke again.

"He can't speak. He must have inhaled a lot of smoke. Hopefully we'll be okay....I just have some wounds..." she meowed.

I nodded. "The kits are okay. " I tried to comfort her, but Dustpelt rushed up behind me. "Smoketrail!" He cried, skidding to a stop beside me. "I have something I really need to tell you..."

I felt strong jaws grab hold of my scruff. "What is it? What's going on?" I asked fearfully. "It's about Roughfang and aceclaw.....they didn't...they...they're dead...." I drew in a sharp quick breath.

"Roughfang fainted from smoke inhalation and burned to death. Aceclaw had an entire burning den collapse on her. Vixenpaw has become medicine cat but left paralyzed..."

I was easily able to yank away from the jaws holding me. "LIAR!" I dodged forward, but gasped in surprise at the shock i felt rippling through my body as i was grabbed back. I finally turned.

"Goldeneyes..." half the Tom's face was not only singed, but overall badly burned. The half was completely obscured, even one of his golden amber eyes. He sighed and licked my cheek. He coughed and padded away. I looked to my friends for help.

They all shrugged. I whimpered, having no idea why my mate wouldn't talk to him. "Guys I have a plan that could stop this.."

We told iceglare to meet us at fourtrees at moonhigh, two days from now and he agreed. He took waterpaw with him everywhere so I wouldn't have to worry about doing too much convincing.

It didn't take long to find her with some help from a street cat. He led us right to the fence which reeked of my ex-mate relatively newly. I jumped the fence first. "Are you Zenobia and Hellfire?"

Zenobia was his mate with ginger fur. Hellfire was his daughter with reddish fur. They nodded. They seemed like sweet girls, and depressingly innocent as we took them. I felt bad but it would be worth it.

We had them tied up at fourtrees before moonhigh. They were clearly starving, and I had this guilty feeling that made me realize that Zenobia looked pregnant. I had my friends here with me, even Redtail came, despite being now blind.

Iceglare and waterpaw both walked with pride until they noticed their family. They rushed over, but goldeneyes held them back. I put my claws to the female's neck. The poor queen was whimpering and panting.

"I'm prepared to kill a queen if this is what it takes for you to stop torturing everyone around you for selfish desires."i hissed.

"Kill her, i dare you. Do it!"
I didnt have the heart to kill her for good. I pierced her neck at first and slowly cut across until- he cracked. "Wait please dont kill her! Ill do anything, just dont kill her! I-"

I slit her throat at a sudden wave of hatred.

Iceglare screeched and ran over to her body, licking her face frantically. "Wake up! Wake up! Please wake up!" He cried into her fur, making his own white pelt bloodstained. "

I finally broke, releasing hellfire who crashed into her father and brother, in tears. "You've lost your mate and unborn kits, and hellfire will die in your paws."

We gave her deathberries.

The female coughed and choked and collapsed ,leaning on her father as her body shut down and killed her slowly and painfully. "So..." i approached the trembling tom and put my claws to Waterpaw's throat. "Cease your reign of terror. Otherwise i will kill and destroy all you have left."

Iceglare was at a loss. "Nonononono please! Without him i dont even have a reason to live! I'm so sorry! I didnt mean to kill splitkit!"

I flicked my ear.

"I am so sorry for everything, he's all I have left!" Iceglare screeched and with a strike of guilt, i let waterpaw run and cling his father like a kit. I was satisfied now.

"Iceglare?"

"Y-yeah...?"

"One more death because of you, and he's dead."

"I understand..."

"Good."

Chapter 19-Love

With our luck, he may have just put on a show so that we would put our guard down. I really don't know. I just hope we can. If he's planning anything else against us and is telling white lies, we have no chance of fixing our lives, now. By then it'll be far too late.

I really wasn't looking forward to finding out. It wasn't the best experience to be living in windclan again, especially not without the cats I knew. All the cats I knew before I left were grown up. But there were two cats that I did want to see. I looked round for a bit before a thought hit me.

I padded slowly over to the nursery, recovered from my demise and several kitless moons in the clan. Now it was covered in Flowering vines. I smiled to myself. I peeked my head in, almost surprised to see queens here. "Dreamheart." I flinched and looked up to notice Icestar standing beside me. The pale ginger medicine cat padded over to us. "yes?" she mewed. Her blue eyes still shone as if she was still young as she was when she left. she was only 18 moons back then. It kind of made me sad to see her like this.

"after what happened to shadowclan's camp, the remaining cats have joined us for a while. This is Smoketrail."Icestar meowed. Dreamheart's eyes shone even brighter. she Nuzzled me gently. "it's been a long time, hasn't it? I didn't recognize you. You have definitely been in your own fair share of fights, haven't you?" she meowed, her eyes scanning over my battle scars.

I nodded shyly. "yeah...definitely...where are-" "oh yeah, Your brothers are in here. Rabbitleap had kits yesterday so I had to check on them." I smiled brightly, remembering the past.

I noticed a large female, tearing into a rabbit fiercely. Ruffledpaw nudged me"I bet she's trying to figure out how many bites she can fit in her mouth before they fight" I snickered at his comment. The female glanced up at us and rolled her eyes playfully.

I nodded. "Can I see them?" I asked, feeling my body tremble with excitement. Dreamheart nodded and lead me into the nursery. "Ruffledfur! Rabbitleap! Twitchear!" Dreamsong called in a singsong tone. The three cats looked up curiously. I already knew who was who. Twitchear's ear kept flicking constantly. Ruffledfur's fur was messy, and Rabbitleap had pale brown fur.

I looked down at the queen's belly where three small kits squirmed around. "Huh?" twitchear tilted his head. Ruffledfur just looked a little puzzled.

But Rabbitleap smiled."hey...smoketrail, right? It's been a while, hasn't it?" she meowed softly. I padded closer and sat by her. "yeah, really. I wish I could have been here sooner.." I replied. Ruffledfur bounded over to me and knocked me over, knocking the wind out of my lungs. He tussled with me until twitch joined in. It felt like the kithood I should have had so long ago.

Finally we quit our playing when another queen approached. Twitchpaw flipped onto his stomach and touched noses with the expectant female and purred. "who is this?" she asked quietly. Her eyes were crystal blue. Beautiful.

"My little sister from shadowclan." Twitchear meowed. I watched her with astonished eyes "it's nice to mert you! You're beautiful!" I meowed. She blushed and glanced away. "Thank you..."

I then noticed her expression turn solemn. She pressed up to Twitchear, beginning to breath heavy, struggling to breath at all. I became overall alert at the queen's heaving chest and round swollen belly.

"Is she ok? What's wrong with her?"I asked. "I-I don't know. D-Dreamheart!"Twitchear called frantically, the medicine cat hurried to assist the queen while we were left to calm her frantic mate.

✳✳✳

"Everyone? You can come in now." We had been waiting outside the nursery for quite a while, listening to the queen in agonizing pain, so much so that I felt my own stomach twist. We slowly padded

into the nursery, and I could feel Twitchear trembling with both fear and excitement.

Rabbitleap and The queen who I now knew was a cat called Crystaleyes quite fittingly. One extra kit now suckled at her belly, being cleaned up. Twitchear looked curiously to Dreamheart.

"Before you panic, she's fine....as of now. She lost a lot of blood, thats all. She's struggling to breath, though...I'm not sure how much longer she can hold on for.." Dreamheart mumbled, but met Twitchear's sorrowful gaze evenly.

Twitchear collapsed by his mate, burying his muzzle into her neck. "Please dont go...." Crystaleyes stirred before emitting a soft, final purr.

"Love"

I couldnt help but believe that i just brought sudden death and misfortune wherever I went, and I didn't want it around these poor kits. My brothers were already stressed.

I backed quietly out of the den, everyone else too preoccupied with Twitchear's overwhelming grief.

I took a few steps back before turning around and coming nose to nose with Icestar. I squeaked after a moment and flinched back. "Relax...I just want to talk to you." He meowed softly, looking as if he was truly trying to hold back tears.

After remembering what I did to his mind and life, I felt almost obligated to comply. He lead me out to the river. It was quite the walk but I didn't mind.

He sat down and I sat beside him. As his blue eyes gazed down at the slow moving water, I saw a brief glimpse of the curious young kit I once knew. It unsettled me that such a sweet tom turned into a murderous monster.

"I...I-i'm sorry..."
"What?"
"I'm sorry!" After all these moons he finally gave in, and broke down

in tears. "I don't know what I've become after all these moons! I was nothing but jealous at first! I didn't mean to kill that poor kit! What I did and what I did to that apprentice that day were out of spite, jealousy, and my love for you!" He cried.

I stayed silent, unsure of what I could possibly say to comfort the windclan leader, who now appeared as a defenseless, helpless heap of white, silver-speckled fur.

"All those deaths I caused....they weren't accidents, but I finally realize what I've done!I finally pushed you out of my thoughts with someone else and you've killed her and my daughter! All I have left is Waterpaw now!"

I drew in a sharp breath, but as I reached for him, he stretched his neck, revealing large scars on his throat. Seven scars. 7 lives. He took seven of his own brand new lives in guilt for all the damage and death he caused. I pressed my pelt up against him and he nuzzled my neck, and I purred. I felt love and affection for him and always have and will.

The punishment for what we did afterwards was about to come all in one punch.

Chapter 20- Death (sensitive theme warning)

Death.

That was the price.

From the den where the rememnants of shadowclan lived, I heard commotion outside. I reluctantly got up and padded out of the den to see a crowd of cats near the middle of the clearing.

I pushed my way through the crowd and gasped in shock. "Oh starclan, what happened to him!?" I shrieked in disbelief.

"The dawn patrol found him." Meowed the new leader;softstar. "They say he was not dead when they found him. When they found him, they claim that he was just standing there with a smile on his face before he was hit and almost instantly killed. "

"He more than likely did this on purpose...oh starclan, why...." Waterpaw whimpered. It occurred to me now, that the poor thing was orphaned and alone.

He witnessed the death of his mother and sister.

And watched in horror when his dad killed himself.

And listened with disbelief when I revealed that I may or may not be carrying Icestar's kits.

Chapter 21- He Wanted To Dissapear

I was both depressed and happy to be carrying the deceased leader's kits. Especially knowing that it was the last thing he said to me that mattered.
"Whatever happens to me, the kits are yours. I don't need the pride or the credit. Being your mate, if only for a little while is enough."

It's scary to know that what I did just to get him to stop terrorizing the forest lead him to do this. I don't think I'll ever be able to figure out what made him want to love me again.

With his death and our kits, I wasn't sure what to think anymore. Goldeneyes wasn't very pleased with what I'm in, but he has Just accepted it now. Waterpaw wasn't thrilled either, but was still happy to have little siblings.

I wasn't really sure what to really do with him. He had lost every thing he had now. To me. I could have told the little gray cat what his father had done in the past, but I spared him the knowledge.

It was hard to dodge and evade the questions of the windclan she-cats. They asked them out of only curiosity but it made me extremely uncomfortable. There was one that I loved and appreciated her company.

Juniperleaf.

Softstar's mate. She had blue-gray fur and slightly folded ears. She didn't seem to mind my quiet demeanor at all. All she really seemed to want to do was help me. She invested in keeping most cats away from me in order to help me back on my paws.

It was nice.

Windclan wasn't in disarray anymore, unlike the chaos when I left

it. "So..." the little queen started. Her short fur ruffled slightly in the gentle breeze. I lifted my gaze to meet her amber eyes.

"I don't remember you well...You must have been separated from everyone sooner than I thought. I really believed I would remember a cat like you." Juniperleaf meowed. I sighed nervously, entirely aware of what she meant.

"I get it. I don't know how I never realized the difference between the cat who had me and the one who raised me. I guess I never thought about...."

That sweet milky scent I caught whenever my mother was close. I only noticed it once, ever and it was when I was really young. I overlooked it as a minor, unimportant detail. What would have happened if it had noticed it before? Then again, my entire life before exactly 12 moons old was spent and darkness, then captivity. I was given the bare minimum of this to make sure my heart kept working.

"Smoketrail, I'm so sorry, I didn't mean to..." it took the gentle queens words for me to notice the tears streaming down my face. "It's okay....would you mind...telling me more about you...?"

"Huh...? Uhm...okay..well you already know my living family...but my mom and dad were Dawntail's real kits. I really wish we were truly related. It would be cool to have a half-sister." Juniperleaf meowed happily, eyes gleaming.

"My memories of my kithood are beginning to fade away....I don't remember much from before 11 moons old...there's Just a reacurring memory of starving in that dark den every night..." I murmured.

"You were trapped. Sort of. You were kept in the den all day, and only at night were you free to roam. I had always thought it was funny the way you wandered, looking so confused. Most cats ignored or beat you, but those who were nice to you became your friends. " juniperleaf replied. "Think about it. Try your hardest to remember those few hours you got to spend outside each night. You opened your eyes very late, I was told. Maybe your memory is affected?"

I nodded and shrugged. I closed my eyes, thinking hard, trying to dig deep into my own memory.

I remember one night, wandering into the extra den that had become the nursery after my entrapment. I can easily remember Freckleface's parents easily now. They were only older apprentices when I was a little kit, but they loved each other deeply already.

Splitstar was an apprentice, too. I don't remember her as vividly, though. She didn't have the v in her ear at the time, but based on the fact that I was never able to keep track of my age, it probably wasn't long after that she got into that fight.

I remember that look on her face when I ran into her, not paying attention. She was visiting her mother who died not long after that day. I realized now how oblivious I had been to who she was. She got mad. She didn't hurt me. She just yelled, apologized, and sent me on my way.

It was a happy time for the most part. I didn't really have friends, but I had always decided to talk to anyone who didn't hate me whenever possible. One thing I do now remember is about food...

"Your mother said no food today." Dreampaw meowed. She was always the one who brought me things to prevent me from dying. "But why? I didn't do anything bad today. Or ever! I'm so hungry..." I cried. Even as an apprentice I was little and pretty malnourished.

Dreampaw didn't meet my eyes. She couldn't. "I don't know, but she said I couldn't give you anything today, I- I'm so sorry....c-come on, f-follow me..." She nudged me out the den and lead me out a back way out of camp behind her den.

She was swift, and caught me a fat mouse with ease, despite having little to no warrior training. She was only a medicine cat apprentice but she could hunt really well. She dropped the mouse at my paws. "Here. Eat quick and then clean yourself up. If your mother asks anything, don't worry, I'll help." She meowed softly. She was far to kind for her own good. I never really thought to ask why she liked her job so much. Or me.

This same thing repeated several different nights over the course of

dream paw's apprenticeship. She pitied me. She felt bad denying me food, and even took beatings when she fed me when she wasn't supposed to.

"I need to remember to thank her..." I murmured. "Who? Dreamheart?" Juniperleaf asked. I flinched, not realizing that I had spoken out loud. "Oh! Yeah, her. It's never occurred to me that I would have been dead without her."

"Oh yeah, you've had kits before, right? What's it Like? " juniperleaf asked. "Sometimes it's awesome, sometimes depressing, sometimes it just drives you crazy. " I meowed, smiling a little.

"Hey!" A little army of young apprentices ran up to us. Juniperleaf got to her paws and touched noses with the one who lead the group with two squirrels in her mouth "Good job, Applepaw. " she purred. the small apprentice flicked her tail, and the others scattered around camp, delivering prey to other cats.

Applepaw put own the prey in front of us and watched as we both took a bite. juniperleaf screwed up her face. "My starclan, where did you catch this prey?" She asked.

I knew what she was talking about. "Something isn't right....it doesn't taste right..." I agreed. Applepaw whimpered anxiously. "I didn't catch anything bad, I don't Think! It should be fine!"

Dreamheart soon suddenly appeared from her den and rushed over, raising her paw and hitting Applepaw upside the head. *Hard.* Hard enough to make the she-cat stumble backwards. "Ow, what was that for!?" Applepaw whimpered.

"Who were you hunting with?" Dreamheart hissed. "Treepaw, Leafpaw, rabbitpaw, and waterpaw....w-why...?" Dreamheart scoffed, shoving a thrush in the apprentice's face. It looked like something had been eating at the animal's rotting flesh from the inside out. Wait. *Rotting flesh?*

"Huh!?" Applepaw shrieked. "Smell this!" Dreamheart continued to snap, throwing a rabbit and a mouse -both seeming to have bites taken out of them- on the ground. We all sniffed it.

"nightshade..." Juniperleaf slowly murmured.
"Rotten flesh...?" I asked.
"Deathberries...." Palepaw answered.
Dreamheart nodded. "The prey is rotten, and some of it is poisoned! How did you not realize!?" She snapped. "I-I don't know!" Palepaw shrieked.

I glanced around and spotted Waterpaw, surrounded by three other apprentices, all of which who were a part of the little group they had walked up in. I got curious and left the dangerous situation, and got closer to the apprentices.

"What did you do to the food!?"
"You poisoned it!"
"You knew it was rotten and you still told us to take it!"
"Idiot!"
"You're trying to kill us!"
"Psycho!"

I gasped softly at the comments the apprentices were spitting at the small tom. Waterpaw was visibly shaking. He held his paws over his head, and his breathing was so heavy and loud that it worried me. It was the next comments that set him over the edge.

"You're just like your dad! You just want power! You just want to eliminate us because we're in your way, don't You!?" One of the Tom's hissed.
"That's probably right! I won't be surprised if your mom and sister really did commit suicide because of You! Or did *you* kill them!?" A she-cat spat. Finally waterpaw fully burst into tears and lashed out at all of them, scratching at the faces, chests, and shoulders, but he was outnumbered and they defeated him.

I quickly hid as they walked away, likely heading back to their den. I hesitated for a moment, frozen. They had the light gray tom beaten to nothing. Just a bloody lump on the grass. I slowly approached him. He flinched at my touch, but managed to lift his head to look at me.

"It's my fault....I didn't know.....they hate me...They want me dead....they're gonna kill me...everyone hates me...why am I here?"

Waterpaw went on and on until I licked him on his head. "Calm down....It's true, these cats do hate you...they hate you for things that they know you did not do. They hate you because your father did them. I don't hate you. Icestar did some bad things, but listen...you'll survive..."

He shook his head and got to his paws. "They'll be better off without me..." and he dashed off. I didn't go after him yet. I went back to sakurabloom, Applepaw, and Juniperleaf first, and they could instantly tell I was in a panic. "Smoketrail, what's wrong? What happened?" Sakurabloom demanded.

"It's Waterpaw! He ran off into the forest, I don't know where he's going, but I think he's trying to *kill* himself! I can't go after him alone!" I rushed. Juniperleaf gasped. "Oh starclan!" Applepaw pressed her ears to her head. "I thought he was lying..." I perked up my ears. "What?"

"He kept telling me they were messing with him...tormenting him...He stopped eating a lot...stopped going out with us as much...stopped talking as much....I didn't believe him..." Applepaw whimpered.

"We'll talk about this later! First we need to help him!" I hissed. Dreamheart nodded, "Applepaw, get warriors from both shadowclan and windclan. I'll get herbs ready just in case he does...," her voice trailed off.

It wasn't long before we found him. The thunderpath. I had a feeling we would find him here. The look on his face was one I'd never seen, not even on Icestar. His eyes were dull of tears and he wasn't empty, he was a total wreck. They had destroyed him to dust. He was sobbing heavily, his paws on the edge of the thunderpath on the other side.

We were still. No one was really sure if we could help him, but it was worth the try. No one really understood the situation. "Waterpaw, come on....you think we'll be better off without you, but you know you want to live...please....."

I almost took a breath of relief at first when I saw an oncoming

monster, and he wasn't on the path. But as it came closer, he stepped out onto the path where the monster would hit him without trouble. The only thing I heard him say was...

"Yolo...."

You
Only
Live
Once

But today we'll prove them wrong. As a split second decision, unsure who would be hit the worst, I leaped onto the path and knocked him off his paws. I heard a yowl of agony, but all I felt was wind rush over my head.

Chapter 22- Flowers And Faith

I sat up to realize that I was almost entirely unscathed. The monster had gone right over my head, but Waterpaw...it ran over his back legs, nd he now lay in a pile of bloody gray fur, yowling and crying. The monster that had hit him stopped on the side of the thunderpath and a twoleg got out.

The group of warriors, Applepaw, and dreamheart stayed put before they ran into the underbrush. They were afraid of twolegs Everyone was. I noticed the twoleg was approaching us, and I stood over waterpaw protectively. I hissed at the twoleg as it tried to touch me. I've learned a lot about two legs from ex-kittypets in the clans and rouges.

I realized with dread, that waterpaw would die if we didn't get help, and this twoleg wasn't going away. I picked up Waterpaw's scruff and dragged him gently over to the twoleg. The twoleg picked up waterpaw very gently, and we were both trapped in the monster.

Waterpaw was laid onto a mound of material in a box. There was another cat in here. I looked around until I spotted another box, a mother and kittens. The mother and kittens were just as friendly and beaten as could be. The queen was awake, and derived her attention from her kits to me.

"Who are You?" She asked. Her voice was gentle, but she was constantly trembling. "Smoketrail. What's wrong? What's your name?" I asked, genuinely curious. The white tabby couldn't have been a kittypet, she was too hurt.

"Orchid...that's My name...and I'm fine, I'm just in a lot of pain right now...I've been almost beaten to death by ruthless humans...they planned to force me to do nothing but have kits. Then they take them, and give them away. I ran away. I had my kittens today...I was found by these humans, and now they are taking me to get me help." The queen meowed. Her blue eyes shimmered.

She stopped trembling, and calmed down, becoming aware that I was covered in blood. "Oh dear, you look horrible...and expecting kittens? You must be very brave..." she murmured. I couldn't help but feel a spark of pride. This cat had been abused, but still she lived on with a litter of four.

Suddenly I felt a jolt as the monster came to a stop. Orchid squeaked in surprise, startled. I hopped into the box she was in, not wanting to bother Waterpaw's crushed legs. Plus they would maybe realized that I was ready to have kits myself rather soon.

I don't remember much about what happened after that. We were healed and taken to a large twoleg den, a whole room to ourselves. It was just me, waterpaw, orchid and her kittens.

Orchid was very friendly. She was becoming more social with us, even comforting waterpaw sometimes. I knew we would have to return home to the clans, but maybe we could take orchid with us. She clearly loved the outside, but she was concerned about her kits. She had a point. She knew the two legs weren't going to keep her kits around, and had already given away one, leaving her with three.

Waterpaw's legs weren't fully healed, but that wouldn't matter. He could rest as much as he wanted to when we got home. During the night, after almost a moon of tasteless food, metallic water, extreme comfort and care, I was just about ready to have the kits, only days away, Orchid told me. I didn't want to have my kits in twolegplace.

I woke everyone up, and we were ready. Orchid herded her clumsy kits to stay close. The window was left open. It would be risky for W aterpaw to jump, but he was simply concerned about getting home. That's all he wanted to do at the time.

The two legs didn't seem to hear us leave the twoleg den, so we walked. We walked all the way to fortrees and rested. We hung out there for a while. I knew it would be a full moon tonight, I was keeping track. I was astonished by what I was greeted with. Shadowclan and windclan coming from the directions of their own clans.

We were going home. For real this time. We were also greeted with many happy faces. And missing ones. Softstar and splitter greeted me with a question I dreaded. "Where do you want to stay?"

I wanted to stay in windclan with my family. But at the same time, I wanted to take Orchid to join shadowclan with her kits. In the end, I chose windclan. Goldeneyes came with me, and my brothers were allowed to join back. I wasn't super happy to leave my friends, but I was giving another cat and kits a chance.

" My name is Orchid. I've lived on my own for a lot of my life. Then I was taken in by twolegs..beaten and bred....I ran away, had kits in the wild, and met smoketrail....it's a long story but I want to stay in the wild..."

Orchidpetal. A beautiful name that soon belonged to a beautiful, sweet she-cat. The kits got along just fine with the clan kits. I guess they would never be able to tell the difference between themselves and their friends. Thwy were cute little things, clumsy little white and black balls of fluff.

So was faithkit. The journey between almost getting hit by a monster and returning home. Hadn't harmed her at all. She was born without problems, and she was perfectly healthy according to Dreamheart. No blindness, no deafness, no paralysis. She didn't make noise, which gave the impression that she was mute or just really quiet. I didn't mind that, though.

Goldeneyes was pretty happy about it, as surprising as it may seem. Waterpaw healed well, but one thing still torn at my mind. No juniperleaf. She was dead. The day the apprentices brought back the tainted prey, she had been fine, but it soon made her very sick. She had her kits, then died days after.

The kits were fine though, but there was one thing that happened that will always make me smile when I see faithkit.

She looks almost exactly like her father.

Chapter 23- Happy?

In all this time I've seen and experienced a lot of things. Great things, but then there were...*other* things. A lot of which I would like to forget about, no matter the cost."But it just seems like the more I try to forget about it, I just remember it more vividly, it really is a scary thing...I've never really cared much about the pasts of my denmates, but he....there was something about him that I found myself so curious about." Applepaw mewed.

"I don't know what it is....he just seemed so...mysterious. and quiet. I thought that for being the son of the deputy, and at one point; the leader, he would be more arrogant than he was. But he was shy, submissive, and quite a loner." Treepaw mumbled, his green eyes casting down to his paws.

"His whole personality changed, but we couldn't really tell....he was living a nice life of solitude for a while....it made us realize how much power we really had over him...." Leafpaw added on, her small ears pressed to her head guilty.

"We started telling him things...some were true, some were lies..,some were a little bit if both...he believed every word we said with little to no convincing. We tormented him...we made him do things that no cat should do...especially as a tom....it was one thing we did that pushed him over...." Rabbitpaw sighed, refusing to meet my eyes.

"We knew his mind wasn't stable...his dad wasn't either....we made him provoke his father....Iceglare...he practically beat him into hell...he was so messed up, he couldn't train for weeks....but we didn't stop there..." Treepaw continued.

My ears perked up when I noticed Applepaw bite her lip. I looked at her expectantly. "They told him "Hurt her. Beat her. Kill her, do whatever you want to her. The only goal is to mess up her mind beyond repair. "....and that's what he did...."

I gasped softly in shock.

"I can't go back on that...,nothing can allow me to recover from what he did to my body....*nothing*." Applepaw hissed. Now everyone was quiet. I was too afraid to say anything to her, worried that whatever I could or did say might backfire.

"He felt so bad about it....that was when he first started threatening to kill himself...eventually he tried to kill me.....he hoped thst if he eliminated me, that the regret would dissapear..." Applepaw kept getting quieter.

"We caught him only because he was hesitating to kill her after getting her weak. We beat him so bad, that his dad beat him up twice as bad for not fighting back. Another moon or so of missed training...then it was our turn.."

" We were given permission to hunt with each other without our mentors. We didn't know the prey was rotting, or that it was poisoned. We just thought it was making our jobs easier..." treepaw mumbled.

"So we brought it back and almost killed our clanmates, not only that..." Leafpaw continued.

"Berrykit and Shiningkit don't have a mom because we were just being lazy...."Rabbitpaw added.

Softstar was just as soft as his name suggests. The thought of his motherless kits and dead mate was bringing tears to his eyes. "Alright, I think that's enough. Let us speak with softstar alone door a bit. You are in no way let off the hook." I hissed.

Beside me, The elderly medicine cat agreed with a nod. The apprentices scattered. "So..." I turned to softstar "how are you holding up...?" I asked. He sighed "slightly better.." he replied.

"Poor thing...what a shame those little apprentices stole from you what was important to You.." Dreamheart attempted to console the tom. He dismissed her words with a flick of his ear "I still have too little daughters to love and watch them grow...I will spend every

life with them....I can't lose them...."

For such a strong leader, he was a sweet father. Juniperleaf had told me that he was always investigating the deaths of clanmates. That included helping diagnose cause of death with Dreamheart, and the more...bloody deaths. However what I was about to hear was something I never saw coming.

"Smoketrail, we want your help with some new issues we've been made aware of." I pricked my ears at how serious Dreamheart now sounded. "What is it...?" I asked cautiously.

"Three warriors. Two Tom's and a she-cat. Dead. There's definitely a lot of blood. The she-cat is alive but seems traumatized and refuses to speak to us. The Tom's are from our clan, but the female is unidentified. She refuses to tell us her name. We've only been questioning her for a while. When I left the scene and arrived here was when the apprentices approached me looking like wilting flowers." Dreamheart meowed.

I listened intently. "Were there any other cat's around?"I asked. "More she-cats. All well fed and clean, as well as a few more Tom's, once again in perfect shape. What do you think it is?" Softstar meowed.

"I want to see this place."

It was partially underground. It was dimly lit by sun that shone in as it set. It was surprisingly quiet. As they saie, two young Tom's the age of a partially mature male warrior lay dead. In another area, more well lit, some windclan warriors were trying to question a terrified she-cat.

I shushed the cats behind me and snuck around. In another larger area, I knew what was going on. She cats were wandering the place, tails in the air; provoking their male counterparts. I cringed. I didn't know this place existed, but I could tell it was disgusting. I shook my head and turned to see softstar now standing there.

"We want you to try talking to her first before we ask these rats. " and he lead me back t the den with the shaking she-cat. I took a

deep breath before crouching down to meet her blue eyes, close enough to feel her trembling. "My name is Smoketrail, what's yours..?"

Chapter 24- Petals

She said nothing, but kept her eyes locked on mine. She was covered in dried blood. I thought to see something worse, but they probably meant her mind when they said *severely injured.* She was clearly hurt, but looked good enough to talk to. "Look, we aren't going to hurt you...." I whispered. "You will live. You can return to your free wild life or join us after it's over...just trust me....I don't want to force you."

Her trembling subsided slightly. "I....my name is Rose....." I nodded. "Tell me, what happened?" I asked quickly. She shook her head. "I...I can't..." She whispered, casting her eyes at the ground.

I narrowed my eyes to green and blue slits. "Force it out of her." I shivered, hearing Dreamheart voice in my left ear. "Calm her down, she'll talk when she's comfortable, I bet..." software whispered to me. I couldn't choose so I went for the first thing that came to me.

"What were you doing here, *Rose?"* The she-cat flinched at the harshness in my voice. "Why were you here in a place like this? I can already tell what goes down here, so why were you participating in It?" I hissed.

Finally she gave in after a moment of cowering under my cold glare. "M- my kits!" She shrieked, catching me by surprise. "The gray one- he found me trying to help one of my sick kits. He told me that if I came here, he would help me. I believed him..."

I glanced over at the dead gray tom. His neck was slit messily, claw marks showing that they'd definitely fought for a while, and that both had struggled quite a bit before he wss killed. I looked back at her. "And what about the other?" I flicked my tail st the other tom who was white, now covered in blood, so much so that I couldn't even tell what killed him.

"When I arrived, I had no idea what I was in for....he took my kits away somewhere so that they didn't see....When he came back I

realized what thwy were going to do...,I let him...they nursed my kits back to health and fed them, but....It continued....By this point I just felt like their toy....I realized that they had betrayed me...traded my freedom for a sick game....so I..." She paused.

I crouched down a bit, softening my gaze so that she would feel less pressured. "I attacked the gray tom first...I jumped on his back and tried to cut his neck from behind....he slammed me against the wall, but I managed...The other begged for mercy before I'd even gone near him....It took me until he was lifeless to realize...he was probably a slave just like me..."

I couldn't believe my ears. "We'll find your kits. Just hold tight okay-?" A voice cut me off. "Don't worry, we heard them crying." I turned to look at Goldeneyes. Beside him was a tom, well-fed but bruised and beaten. In his jaws were a female kit, mewing for her mother. She was at least a few moons younger than a time, most likely born back to back.

Rose's eyes lit up. "Oh my gosh!" She fell back to the ground when she tried to stand, but goldeneyes let the kits run to her. She held them close like any mother would. Both kits were as hurt and badly bruised as the mother was. I couldn't even bear to think of what they were doing to the small things.

"What do we do with her?" Goldeneyes asked. "There's no way we can leave her.."
Dreamheart sighed. "Oh well, guess We'll have to take her with us..."her eyes drifted up to softstar with a smug look. He smiled. "Rose, do your kits have names?" He asked.
The queen glanced up, clearly surprised at the question. "Well, yes, of course. The oldest one is Rain...The little one is Petal...their father didn't want a daughter....so he left us all..."

"Don't worry, we'll get you safe, fed, and shelter. One more thing....have you ever met a young tabby named Orchid, by chance?"

"Its...warm..." Rain was almost fascinated by the comfort of the nursery. He wandered around, recovering easily from the events.

Petal on the other hand, got along better with orchid's kits. On the other hand, Rose got along with pretty much nobody. Orchidpetal often brought the younger queen to tears, even though she knew she was perfectly old enough to have kits in the wild, but way too young for a clan. She would go on and on, telling her she was irresponsible, that she should have killed them before they were born because she wasn't ready.

Worst of all, she told her she should have gotten rid of petal in order to keep her mate. Orchidpetal had no morals. The even worse part was that I was the cat the kits came to when they doubted their mother's love. But finally..

"That's enough. You shouldn't ever speak to Rose that way. She's been through a type of he'll you've seen, plus far more than you know. You escaped in free will. She was there until we discovered the smell of the dead bodies."

Both queens expressed it differently, but we're surprised to see that Softstar looked pissed. His glare narrowed in on orchidpetal who curled her tail around her kits, shrinking back protectively and surpressing a fearful hiss.

The leader said nothing to her. He just simply sat by Rose's side. He was about to say something to her, yet I interrupted him. "Softstar, let her rest. She's had a long day." I refrained from hissing the words.

He sighed with agreement, clearly dissapointed at how much of a fact my words were. He slowly got to his paws yet hurriedly left the den. I sighed and watched him go.

I perked up my ears to a terrifying yowl, rushing out the den, almost running into Softstar. My eyes widened with shock. "Oh my starclan.."

Chapter 25- His Madness

"Well I'll be damned..." Softstar muttered.

Applepaw and W aterpaw were in a heated argument despite Waterpaw's slight setback and their renewed friendship. It seemed that Applepaw had a slit on her shoulder that looked painful. This only encouraged her to torture him with the knowledge that the clan despised the harmless apprentice.

she turned the the crowd of cats as Softstar and I watched. "Do you see what this foxhearts has done to me, his friend and denmate! Don't remember the fire he set ablaze!? " the clan yowled their agreements. "You can't trust a murderers kin! They're gonna end up just like him!"

They?

It took me a heartbeat to realize that faithkit was not by my side, but clearing behind her older half brother. She looked so afraid that it made me fear that she was enduring some type of trauma.
"Kill them! Chase them out!"
At the words, Icestar's kin rushed to hide and as expected, they his behind us; faithkit between my paws and W aterpaw behind Softstar.

"Mom, they're gonna kill us!"Waterpaw cried. "Mommy, I'm scared. Why do they hate us? Why are they so afraid of me...?" She whimpered. I flicked my eyes up, gazing helplessly at Softstar. I searched his eyes for help, but found nothing.

Softstar sighed. "Everyone, leave them be. Just because their father made some bad decisions-"
"Some bad decisions!?" Spat a warrior breaking through the crowd. She had a trembling Applepaw at her side. Applepaw's golden fur glimmered in the dusk sun.

"He killed my son! Applepaw is all I have left, and I have every

reason to believe that his sadistic son will murder my daughter, too! He's already destroyed her mentality and taken things away that she can't get back!"

"Peachfur, I get you're scared but the two of them are harmless. Waterpaw is still recovering, besides he only snapped at her just now because she was provoking him. Please leave them be..." Softstar meowed softly.

The female warrior kept her eyes narrowed. "And what about her!?" Her angry glare shifted down to Faithkit who shrunk under her gaze.

"She looks just like him! She'll be just like her father as she gets older! She's gonna kill like him, and she'll die like him! She has madness hidden in her heart! Dont let her pure fur and pretty eyes fool you!" Peachfur went on.

"I'm not bad...,I'm not.,,I'm not bad, am I Mommy?" Faithkit whimpered, eyes narrowing as her pupils grew large with sadness. "I don't want to be bad..."

"I know who can settle this. Snowstripe!" Yowled peachfur. I felt Softstar shiver slightly. "Who's silverstripe?" I asked him. "Icestar's mother. Unlike your parents, she decided she would keep herself going regardless of how horrible her kits were."

I couldn't help but wince at the coldness in his voice. I drew in a deep breath as an old white tabby approached slowly. Her white fur was going gray, accompanying tired old teal-tinted eyes. "Why have you awoken me?" She asked harshly.

"I want justice for my kits! Your son is the father of this apprentice and kit, and because of your son's hellish deeds I want them dead to stop the threat before it occurs!" Peachfur hissed.

"Ah, Smoketrail...it's been a very, very long time since I've seen you....it's a shame what Dawntail put you through...even Starclan had it out for you for quite some time.."

I cast my eyes to my white paws. I nodded slowly.

"But even so, you truly love my son...even after all he did you you and your family.."Snowstripe turned her gaze on Peachfur "Waterpaw was influenced by his father. Iceglare was angry that his lover left him so easily for another tom in another clan. He didn't realize until she had returned how badly his sins would hit him. Losing the rest of his lives to himself was the cost."

Peachfur flicked her ear a bit. "Faithkit is merely a kit. Even if she does begin to morph into her father's ways, she has a wonderful brother, mother and step-father to help her out of it. They're harmless, peachfur. Leave them be."

Peachfur's eyes widened with surprise. She turned on her heels and pounced on waterpaw, causing him to stumble back. In one swift swipe-

dead.

The horror-struck expressions in both cats was something I would never unsee. Everyone was frozen in wait to see which cat was to go to starclan.
"To think....I'd be beaten by you.....funny...." the golden warrior sputtered blood onto the pure white apprentice. She fell limp over him.

The clan fell into dead silence. "M-mommy..?" Applepaw whispered, her breathing becoming heavy. She rushed over and nudged her mother's limp body.

Waterpaw scrambled to her paws and hid his bloody face into my fur. "She attacked me! I didnt know what else to do! I was scared!" He tried to justify, but I quickly hushed him.

"Retribution.." applepaw's wide eyes lifted to meet those of the wise elder. "You've been judged. Starclan has decided that this must be the punishment for you and your mother's crimes..." the elderly female turned and returned to her den.

Applepaw drew in a deep breath. She stood and wandered off to the apprentice's small den, eyes dull. I nuzzled waterpaw gently "stay with me and goldeneyes tonight, okay? Just to make sure you're

okay?" I suggested.

Waterpaw didn't hesitate to agree.

It was complicated for the next few days. Faithkit was growing anxious about her father, and Waterpaw growing evermore mentally unstable. He was growing anti-social and failing his training sessions as I was told.

"Smoketrail?" I flinched and turned to see Softstar's eyes shining in the moonlight. "Huh? Softstar, what's wrong, are you okay?"

A dark shadow cast over his eyes and he buried his muzzle into my neck and burst into tears, catching me by surprise. "Softstar, please you're scaring me! What happened?"

"I just....I think I did something bad.....I think i accidentailly murdered someone..."

Chapter 26- Accidents happen, but was it really?(2)

A/N: This chapter is different from the previous one that had the same title. Just in case it wasn't clear.

I couldn't believe my ears. "You...you What?" I asked, trying to properly comprehend what the leader had just said to me. I looked down and saw the dry blood on his paws. I looked back into his wide fear-struck eyes.

It hadn't occurred to me that he was younger than me until now. I didn't know what to say to the young leader. "Show me..." I managed.

He hesitated before nodding, leading me out of camp. We walked for a while until I recognized the thunderpath, and hesitated to go any further. "That's the thunderclan border! You couldn't have possibly-" but I stopped talked when he looked back at me.

I continued to follow. He stopped along the edge of the thunderpath, and in the dim moonlight I could make out a figure...no, two, lying motionless on the smelly path. "What happened?" I asked.

"I was just walking around and skirted the border. They were hunting on our territory. Even though I'm a leader and have nine lives, they were bigger, stronger, and older. They would have no trouble taking them. I killed one with my own paws....and I pushed the other one onto the thunderpath....I didn't mean to..."

I felt a chill go down my spine. Could the deaths of these two cats really be at the paws of such an innocent leader like Softstar? I sighed. I saw a glint flicker from the other side. "Softatar....go back to camp and rest, we can talk about this in the morning....I need to think for now..."

Softstar opened his mouth to object, but decided to walk away.

I sprung to my paws as a dark silhouette approached me from the other side of the thunderpath.

"Mint!" I called. I could see him smile through the darkness. "Hey, Smoketrail. What did you need? And hey, you never actually told me how the last request ended."

I shrugged with a deep sigh. "It worked to some extent....I killed them both, but the tom stopped. He killed himself in the end. Now I'm left with their son and his and my kit.."

Mint shifted his paws uncomfortably. "I see. What is it this time?"

Mint was the street cat who helped us find Icestar's kittypet mate and daughter. In return we gave him whatever he asked for.

"I want some cats killed...." I whispered. Mint flinched, Amber eyes wide. "What!? It's not like you to request an assasination...but....whatever to feed my family....What are the specifics....?" He reluctantly meowed.

"These apprentices have been bullying my son for a long time to the point where he's attempted to take his own life. I want them gone. Someone young had to do it so that they aren't suspicious. Can you do that?" I asked.

Mint nodded somberly. "My daughter...she's the only one I have capable of killing in cold blood....alright...I'll leave her to you tommorow night...." and with that he rushed back through thunderclan territory to return to his rouge family who lived in an abandoned house in twolegplace.

I nodded as he left nd began to hesd back to camp. It gave me a brief sense of relief to know that Waterpaw would no longer have to deal with the torture they delivered. Even though the whole clan wasn't very fond of him, at least the main problems would be out of the way.

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I was almost shocked that Mint actually came through with it. The next sunset he brought her to me. A thin young she-cat with matted gray fur, around the age of an apprentice. Perfect.

"This is Ash. She's at the time my youngest kit until my mate has her litter soon. Please, whatever you do, make sure she comes home safe."Mint begged. I scanned over his own thin silver body. I couldn't refuse.

"Of course. Come on ash, follow me." I meowed and started to make my way back, the frail little cat stumbling behind me, coughing and sneezing. I figured I would have to get her healed up before introducing her to her targets.

When we reached camp, Ash was exausted to the point where she collapsed. "Come on, just a little further..." I urged her to continue, but she was too weak and tired to even get back to her paws. I gave in with a sigh. "Stay here, I'm going to get someone to help you."

I ran off to the medicine den. "Dreamheart!" The medicine cat instantly had her attention on me from the urgency in my voice. "I found an apprentice abandoned at the thunderpath! I told her to follow me and she collapsed outside the camp. She's too weak and sick to walk anymore."

The elderly cat nodded and helped me get ash back to camp. She treated her quickly and efficiently and had Ash back on her paws by morning.

When I went to get her, Dreamheart was interrogating her, so I hid and listened.

"Where did you come from?"
"Twolegplace.."
"With who?"
"My daddy..."
"Why?"
"We needed food for my momma, she's going to have kittens soon and she needs to eat a lot....the other clan chased us out, so we came here.."
"What about the rest of your family?"

"My mommy and brother aren't able to hunt. Mommy is having kittens and my brother is very weak...."
"I didn't know Mint had a family....I met him when I was young and grew up with him though he was a rouge. Suddenly he left....and you're why..."
Ash began to get watery eyes.

"Your parents were friends and partial lovers, but became official mates when they found out they were having you. Your mother already had a son. Judging by the bruising, he beats on you, doesn't he?"

When I saw Ash beginning to cry, I stepped in. "I think that's enough about that, don't you? I don't think it's a good time talk about that..."

Chapter 27-You Don't Have To Like Toms

Dreamheart now saw the heavy tears streaming down the face of the young cat. "Yes, I didn't know it would upset her.." She murmured. Without any other words, I dragged Ash out of the den. She had now calmed. "Your targets are treepaaw, rabbitpaw, and Leafpaw. Whatever happens, don't kill Waterpaw or applepaw."

She gave a nod as I lead her into the apprentices den. Ash gave them a charming smile and instantly had treepaw and rabbitpaw as well as waterpaw captured in a trance of admiration, causing them all to blush.

"My name is Ash! It's nice to meet you!" The young female purred. The young Tom's crowded around her, bombarding her with compliments and offers to hang out and so on. Applepaw didn't look impressed, and Rabbitpaw looked pissed.

It was a wonder what about the apprentice's friendliness made them so mad, or now that I think about it. *Jealous.* I'd have to talk to them later. At the least, Waterpaw was smiling.

It made me smile, too. I took one last look at them before walking off. I wanted to find Mint and ask him about what had made Ash burst into tears. Her brother. It would take a while to get to twolegplace but it was still morning so it would be dark when I got back anyway.

I hurried to leave the camp, but no one questioned me, not that I mined that. I made my way as quickly as possible through thunderclan territory and got to the twoleg den by sunhigh. "Mint?" I called "are you here?"

The silver tom emerged from the den, surprised to see me. "Is something wrong?" He asked. I replied with a sigh. "Kind of. Our medicine cat interrogated ash. She lied well but also revealed

something to her."

Mint nodded and invited me in. The building was two floors high and the roof was mostly in fact but it was dirty, dusty and damp. Hidden in a corner, lying on a bed of soft fabric was a black-pelted queen. She looked about the size of a normal she cat since she was thin plus weight from the kits she was bearing.

"Is that..."
"That's Dawn; my mate. She's starving and sick just like the rest of us. Only Ash and her brother Cinder are well." He meowed just as the Smokey gray tom approached. Though thin he was strongly built.

I dragged Mint away from him. "Ash told Dreamheart that her brother was beating on her. I didn't ask her anymore about it because she was upset. She's doing well, but I wanted to ask if you knew..."

"Beating on her? I mean, I have noticed some bruises appearing on her every day when she come home, but I didn't think her brother would have....oh gosh, thank you for telling me! I can't believe kept this from me..."

I nodded. "I'll leave you be. I need to get back soon. Faithkit doesn't do well without me..."

When I returned to camp the moon was setting. I focused my eyes on the hardened sand beneath my paws and checked on Ash. I couldn't believe it. She already had the Tom's wrapped around her paw. They were all over her.

Applepaw was closest, and it seemed that rabbitpaw was arguing with the rouge female. I called for them and they came. Rabbitpaw's tail twitched angrily while Applepaw looked upset.

"Why does Ash being here upset you both so much?" I asked gently.

Applepaw shrugged off the question. They were quiet before she answered "She's pretty..." "She's perfect.." added r abbitpaw. I

flicked my ear. "She's pretty, nice...She's a smooth talker and charming....She's amazing....I don't like her being with them....I just-"

"Wait." Rabbitpaw interrupted. She looked up to me. We were thinking the same thing. "Applepaw, not to sound strange, but....it sounds like...like you might have a crush on Ash." I explained in a soft whispered.

Applepaw looked away. "Yeah....I do....I'm just afraid that since she's so good with the toms that maybe she's not like me.....I'm afraid of how I feel....if I tell her she might think I'm wierd..." and with that she began to cry.

"I have....a crush....on.." She said the name so quietly that I didn't hear her. I tilted my head. She shook hers. "Nevermind, I'll try to be more nice..."

I smiled "good. And applepaw.....I don't know how to help you sweety, I'm sorry..just be brave...."

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That morning was hectic. I was shocked to find rabbitpaw beating on Ash when I went to see what they were up to. As soon as I was spotted, rabbit backed off of the smaller cat. I looked around for Apple. She was already sobbing and came running to me.

"I'm so scared, I don't know what to do! She's going to think I'm wierd if I tell her!" She cried.
"I judge no one no matter what they have said it done. My father taught me that." Ash interjected.

Apple flinched. "Ash, I-!" Right as she was preparing to confess, she noticed the crowd gathering to see what the commotion was about. She got quiet. I felt bad.

"Rabbitpaw, come here." I meowed. Rabbitpaw nodded and approached slowly. They put their backs to each other and sighed and waited for their next instruction. " say what you've wanted to say but couldn't build up the courage to say. Ready set-"

"Ash, I...I have a crush on you...!" She cried. Ash was clearly taken by surprise.
I looked to rabbitpaw "its your turn. It's not fair to Ash and Applepaw if you don't share." I tried to persuade her. She nodded reluctantly.

"I....I have a crush on...on Waterpaw..." rabbitpaw mewed. Even I was taken aback. I looked at the two apprentices to see their reactions. They were frozen, but Ash spoke up first.

"Hehe, Applepaw I'm not sure what to say...I'm flattered, I really am. Is love to get to know you more, but I...." She sighed. She looked to me for help. I just gave her a nod and she happily tackled Applepaw. "I'd love to be with you!"

I pricked by ears to Waterpaw's voice, he sounded ticked.

"Ew! No!I don't like you like that! I don't like you at all, I hate you for all you did to me! I'd never take you as a mate or even a lover!" He clawed her across her cheek. "Don't be so mouse-brained! Youre an idiot and a fool to think I would even consider being with you!" And with that, my son stormed off.

"Rabbitpaw...?" I murmured.

She broke into sobs "I knew it!" She cried."he hates me...."

Chapter 28- Mission Accomplished.

"Oh starclan.." I murmured.
"Someone go after Waterpaw!"Softstar demanded immideately. Goldeneyes rushed off in the direction the apprentice had gone.

Ash looked undeniably guilty. I knew she wasn't used to this. She's killed before but now her job just got a lot harder. I stole a glance at her and she frowned. Her and Applepaw separated and ash padded up to me. "Can I please talk to you?" She asked, shifting her paws nervously "alone..?" She added. She was blushing uncontrollably, Amber eyes angled away to avoid meeting anyone else's.

I nodded and lead her out of the camp, stopping nearby a clearing in the grassy fields. I turned and sat down to face her, curling my tail neatly over my paws. "This isn't about the mission is it?" I guessed.

She nodded shyly. "It's about Applepaw...I'm so sorry I shouldn't have been so close with her, I dont know what to do now, this hasn't ever happened before! "She cried helplessly.
P
"Ashpaw- I mean..sorry..ash. I don't know what to tell you. You just have to stick to the plan. I'm sorry that you have to-"

"I DON'T WANT TO LEAVE HER!"She erupted. I took a few steps back, taken by surprise. She pinned her ears to her skull "I'm sorry...I didn't mean to yell at you, I just...I....I just don't want to leave her....I really do feel for her...don't mind me..." She quieted down into a depressed calmness and turned her back to me.

"I'll talk to your father. If you're lucky, he might let you stay." I meowed. That was all I said before I headed back to camp. Faithkit would be hysterical if I didn't return to feed her. She was pretty anxious without me around.

I couldn't really blame her. A lot of cats held grudges against our little family. Softstar was not himself. After accidentally murdering those cats...something just wasn't right about the way he was acting. I couldn't tell who else had noticed, but I knew his mate definitely had.

Rose had never received a true warrior name because of Softstsr's sudden change in personality, but she didn't seem like she minded much. Not only that but her son Rain was now rainpaw and got along well with the others. Her daughter petal was now petalkit, and got along with faith, but not orchid's kits.

I decided to go talk to Rose first to see if she knew what was going on. When I arrived, the clan was deserted, all but a crowd near the nursery and maybe some cats in their dens. I was alarmed as I should be and rushed over, loving my way through the crowd, heart pounding as I prayed to starclan that faithkit was okay.

She was. But the cat I'd expected to see along with rise..wasn't. She was laying on her side, blank empty eyes narrowed softly and staring into nothing. It hit me with a pang of guilt that the lovely ex-kittypet was dead.

Softstar was with rose, buried into her fur like a kit. He looked broken. Rose looked up at me and flicked her tail to the back of the den. There, goldeneyes was watching with faithkit huddled at the large warrior's paws.

"What happened?" I asked finally, breaking the silence.

" She ate something poisoned. We also lost a lot of her kits but two still remain with Dreamheart to make sure they're alright." Rose meowed. After a brief moment of silence she added "But I have news that will help brighten everyone's spirits again. "

The clan was suddenly at attention, curious to what the queen had to say.

"I'm expecting Softstar's kits..." she sounded a little nervous and uncertain when she said it, but after a brief pause, the clan began to cheer and congratulated the queen. She sat up when Softstar began

to cover her with affectionate licks and I could tell by the size of her small swollen belly, that she was a little farther a long than she was comfortable with telling.

Once the crowed dispersed, I approached the pair. "Congratulations. " I purred, earning a gentle smile from Rose, and a cough from Softstar. I paused to look at him. Now up close, I noticed that I was beginning to be able to see his ribs. I looked back to Rose and she sighed, clearly sharing my concern.

"Thanks, I'm happy to be expecting again. I forgot how good it felt to know I was going to bring new lives into the world..." the queen purred dreamily. It took me until that moment to realize that the tom laying with his head on his mate's belly was fast asleep.

Rose giggled quietly "he's such a kit sometimes himself...But I can see that you've noticed that he's changing. Yes been eating less and he seems to be getting sick...Not only that, I'm afraid my kits might die and make him worse...He still has plenty lives left but I fear he won't change his ways afterwards..."

I stole another glance at the tom, comfey in the comfort of his mate's fur with their tails interlocked lying over his flank as he purred in his sleep. I left them be and joined my own family, watching two warriors taking the dead queens body from the den, who's kits were asleep soundly, seeming to be unaware that their mother was dead.

I realized with a jolt something terrible. I jumped to my paws a poked my head into the apprentices den, glad to see them all soundly asleep, including Ash who upon closer inspection, wasn't asleep at all. I caught her eye and she nodded, without waking the sleeping bundle of Golden fur that she was affectionately laying with.

Mint had agreed to to let Ash stay, he was glad to hear that she completed the mission anyway and killed the three young triplets in their sleep. The clan was devastated, but they had no parents to accuse someone of their deaths.

I knew there were rumours flying around about who did it just by how paranoid Ash was. I realized with dread that the gathering would be soon.

Chapter 29- Premature

Softstar was getting worse.

Padding towards his den I heard yelling from inside. Without letting myself be known I peeked in.

"Softstar I'm so sorry I didn't tell you sooner, I was just scared, okay!? I just-"

"This has nothing to do with being scared! You should have told me! If I knew you were already so far along I wouldn't have sent you hunting and on patrols!"

He was backing her up to the wall until he slashed her stomach. I rushed in and knocked him to the side, and without saying anything to him I rushed the queen to Dreamheart's den "Dreamheart!" But realized she wasn't there.

Instead all rushed to the nursery. There was Dreamheart, crouched by rabbitleap. Quickly, Dreamheart turned and rushed over "what happened?"
"Softstar snapped. I don't know what's going on with him." I replied as Dreamheart laid the queen down.

Another rush of adrenaline and it was over. Rose was fine, but had now kitted prematurely. The kits were small but healthy according to Dreamheart. It was a little tom that was the largest of his litter. He had wet brown fur that sparkled as his mother groomed him.

I smiled and turned my back to her and my smile faded as I gazed now into rabbitleap's shimmering eyes. I padded over to her quickly "rabbitleap what's wrong-" "smoketrail I don't know what to do...the kits are starving but they won't eat! I'm scared that they'll die...."

"Calm down, rabbitleap, I'll get Dreamheart to check on them, they'll be fine, I promise you..." I licked her gently on the ear. "I'm going to go check on Softstar. The gathering is tonight and he isn't

quite himself."

Rabbitleap nodded as I returned to Softstar's den. I paused outside and called out for him "Softstar?" Before padding in when I didn't receive a response. The young leader was laying in his nest with his paws tucked under his chest. "What do you want?"

"The gathering is tonight, remember? Have you decided who will go?" I asked calmly, though deep down, I wasn't sure if he was even listening to me.

He was silent for a moment before he lifted his head yet avoided meeting my eyes "oh...yes.....you will go.....I will also take young ashpaw....Applepaw, waterpaw....uhm....."he listed off cats to me and I gathered them and soon we were off to fourtrees. I trembled with excitement at the thought of seeing my old friends.

Goldeneyes padded up beside me as we walked "are you excited? This is our first gathering as windclan warriors. Well....sort of..." he meowed.

As we reached the top of the hollow, the familiar scent of shadowclan filling my nose as well as the scent of thunderclan. I rushed down into the hollow with clear excitement present.

"Calm yourself." Goldeneyes meowed, but I ignored him, and frantically began to search until I ran straight into a young cat who yelped as we both fell to the ground. "I'm sorry!" The cat apologized, helping me to my paws.

As I got to my paws my eyes widened as much as the moon above us. "Are you Okay? You look a little shocked." The cat meowed curiously, flicking one of her blue-gray ears with confusion.

"Wavepaw...." I whispered half to myself. She still looked a little confused. "My name is Wavewater....do I....know you from somewhere?" She asked. On either side of her appeared the two cats I had once known to be Vixenpaw and wildkit who I could only assume had received her apprentice name.

Vixenpaw ran right up to me and pressed her muzzle to my

neck."Smoketrail! I'm so sorry..." she backed up and gazed up at me with beautiful eyes. "What do you mean?" I asked.

"I had my warrior ceremony after you decided to stay in your birth clan. I'm vixentail Now! Sakurabloom passed away, but by then, I....." she trailed off.

"No....are you-" she cut me off "I had already fallen in love. I've given my medicine cat position up to Wavewater who has peachpaw as an apprentice! Besides, I had no choice because-"

"Vixentail!" A Tom's voice called, making both of us jump. The tom was a white tabby with clashing yellow eyes. He padded up to vixentail and licked her cheek " hey there windclan cat. I'm snowscar."he meowed.

He was one of angelwing's kits. He'd had a brother named bluekit and a sister named wavekit, but they'd both died from sickness. I was surprised he was alive and with a she-cat a few moons older than him.

"So what was It you were trying to tell me?" I asked but noticed that the Tom's tail brushed against her belly, causing her to smile. I Also then realized her belly was clearly becoming swollen. It hit me.

"You two are having kits?" I asked as if I hadn't seen the belly with my own eyes. She nodded with the word "again." And I began to open my mouth to ask what had happened, but the look I vixentail's eyes already told me it was a painful memory for her.

I'd ask her mate later.

"There was quite a lot of deaths in windclan...." I decided to mention, flicking my tail at Softstar who was sitting motionlessly on top of great rock.

"He took over after adderstar? But I thought-"
"It was iceglare. He became icestar. Something happened between him and I and all I really need to say is he felt guilty and did it to himself. On the other hand, I had a kit by him. Faithkit. She's

adorable. She has bad anxiety but gets along with practically everyone. "

Vixentail nodded "and Goldeneyes?" "He's around here somewhere. He wasn't exactly happy about what happened but he treats her like his own daughter. Weber been through a lot with kits so it's a good thing that she managed all this time. She'll be my first kit to make it to apprenticehood..."

Suddenly a yowl sounded from the great rock, alerting me. It was Splitstar who had called the meeting, for Softstar was arguing with one of the other leaders. It was her. I recognized her from when I had first gone to shadowclan. Her white fur gleamed in the moonlight.

"Softstar, Palestar please stop you squabbling so that we may continue or at least begin our meeting?" Splitstar meowed. I could tell she was in a very bad mood but she had good resolve.

"I'm sorry, " Spat the other female leader "but Softstar here is accusing my warriors of being on his territory! She hissed. "

Splitstar ignored her and went on with the meeting. Out of the corner of my eye I caught a flicker of light. Other cats around me began looking around too. The clearing was quiet except a loud cracking noise. the sky was beautiful with the colors rhst exploded, suddenly i saw the light again. That's what it was. At first I thought it might be fire but no.

Mint appeared from the edge of the hollow, his mate dawn had a collar around Teaneck thst shone. Her belly was flat and there were kits near her paws. Beside her, Ashpaw's older brother stood. A dead cat hung from the mouths of each of the three older cats.

Palestar's eyes went wide, but instead of on the bodies of any of the cats, her eyes fixed on Mint. "My son....."

Chapter 30: Heart of a warrior

I paced back and fourth with worry. I wasn't sure what was going on with mint, cinder, and dawn but I hoped they were alright. After Palestar had confirmed the Tom's identity, it caused an early ending. The gathering could not continue because of the leader's wishes. Ash was almost as worried as I was at the moment.

When I had returned, I was made aware that Waterpaw had seemed to have lost his appetite and struggled to eat for the past few days. At first I didn't think much of it. But as uthe days went on, he began to change. There appeared to be a bruise on his shoulder, but it didn't go away. It rather worsened.

When closer inspection was done, he was even struggling to do something as simple as making dirt. From then he stayed in Dreamheart's den. He quickly became considerably weaker.

Faithkit would be an apprentice soon now. In two moons or maybe less. "S-Smoketrail...." Dreamheart's voice shook as she called for me. Noticing how upset she was, I padded into her den with no hesitation "Dreamheart, what's wrong?" I asked oblivious as to what was yet to come.

"It's Waterpaw...I'm so sorry....."Dreamheart murmured, making me instinctively glance at my weakening son, but he looked back at me with half-closed blue eyes .

"Waterpaw has a deadly sickness." Dreamheart meowed, aware of how much I clearly didn't believe some thing was wrong with him. "I asked some of the ex-kittypeys and street cats a few things and they claim that the sickness goes by the name cancer giver by two legs. I'm afraid he won't live much longer."

And she was right. From that night on it was nightmare after nightmare after nightmare. I feared the worst about my son. I worried that one day I wouldn't be able to see my son again forever. It worried me. However, I had a very wierd dream.

I appeared to be in Windclan like always, however it wasn't the same. I was able to move. Many of these cats I did not recognize, but out of the corner of my eyes I caught sight of a flourishing nursery. A pretty white tabby queen was slowly padding out of the nursery, a tiny white kit stumbling over its own paws by her side. It was Snowstripe. I *couldn't help but realize that the kit beside her wasn't icekit. This kit had Amber eyes.*

Padding closer, I caught sight of a blue glint closer to the back of the den. Three kits huddled together on a bed of moss and in between the other two kits lay a runt With pure white fur and ice blue eyes.

THAT was Icekit. He looked weak and frail compared to his massive brothers and almost identical sister. I managed to tear my eyes away from him as I spotted a gray tom heading towards the leader's den. He had a happy looking sparkle in his amber eyes. I followed him as it appeared that I could not be seen by anyone here.

What I found in that den surprised me. Adderstar. Her tail was covering something. "Adderstar. I came to tell you that twitchkit and ruffledkit were ready to be apprentice, but on another note, how are the kits, dear?" The tom asked, licking the leader on the cheek.

I moved in closer . Adderstar revealed what her tail had been concealing as the tom laid down beside her. "They're wonderful." I worry a bit too much, I think....duskit, and roughkit are so active, and smokekit is calm, but silentkit is well.....so quiet... he's worrying me, grayheart.....and what are we going to do about Dawntail? She going to take them!" the leader began to rise to her paws " she's going to take our kits away from me! "She cried, but the warrior calmed her quickly, making her lay back down as the kits she had been nursing began to mewl .

Adderstar was still panicking , logically enough as Dawntail padded into the den "Adderstar!" With twitch and ruffled trailing behind her. " Wait please, they're my kits! C-can I at least say goodbye?" The leader turned and frantically licked at my face.

"Smokekit, silentkit , dustkit.... please , I love you and the world is beautiful. I just wish I could show it to you by your side...."

And with that my vision went black. I was calmed instantly when the

sweet milky scent of my mother filled my nose. "Momma...." I whispered. I felt a tongue rasp over my ear. "Not all is yet lost. You will find what is left of what is gone if you have faith in the forest..."

"Mom....mom! Mom!"

My eyes flew open as I jumped to my paws suddenly, my breathing heavy. I looked around. It was nearly dawn. I had seemed to have woken up the queens with my wailing. I felt kind of bad.

"Smoketrail, are you alright? You should get ready, Faithkit and forestkit are being apprenticed soon. " Rose meowed. I could tell she was worried about me but she asked me no questions.

I glanced over to faithkit and forestkit who were scuffling playfully with each other outside of the nursery. The two we're getting big and and would be making room for Greenleaf kits.
Even against the bigger kit, faithkit seemed to fight him well. If she were to use her claws she could be dangerous if she was an apprentice.

I padded over to her and meowed "I'm going to check on Waterpaw " as Softstar called for a clan meeting. I quickly hurried into Dreamheart's den, but she was practically dragging him out. The tom looked frailer than he had when he had almost gone paralyzed. I sat beside him and after she received her mentor and new name, Faithpaw bounded over and nuzzled her brother happily. "Waterpaw, I'm an apprentice now!" She paused. "Waterpaw?" She leaned her head down and nudged him, making his blue eyes open if only slightly. "Great job, little sis...." he meowed hardly, his voice not much more than a rasp.

"I'm so.....so proud of you...." waterpaw licked her gently on the head before leaning on my shoulder and went still.
"Smoketrail.....I'm so sorry...." came Dreamheart's voice from behind me. "There was nothing I could do...I warned you he had little time left...."

My eyes drifted to her and I smiled gently and nodded slightly with understanding before turning to faithpaw.

"You mean he's dead? No....n-no!" She cried "he said he and I would be together until we both laid side by side as elders! He can't be dead, he can't be!"

But all I could manage to do was hold her close.

Chapter 31: The Heart Of A True Warrior

Because of Waterpaw's death, faithpaw was excused from her training until she was ready to go back. However I wasn't sure if she could ever recover enough in order to train as the apprentice she was.

Forestpaw and her were growing closer. I was surprised to see my shy daughter making friends with him. Sometimes I could see the grief in Forestpaw's eyes. I could tell that he was mourning for the cat Faithpaw had been. Even though she was shy, she had liked to play with him and talk to him when I wasn't around since most of the other cats disliked our family.

But now that cat had hidden down deep in the grief-stricken shell we have before us. Faithpaw and Waterpaw were tight. The two of them had become close as the clan began to believe that the two of them would take after their father's pawsteps.

On the other paw, Rose's kits were gaining just as much negative attention as Faithpaw. Rainpaw was wild and defiant. Petalpaw was quiet and lived in the shadow of her brother and seemed to do whatever he told her to. He clearly seemed to piss Ashpaw off.

Faithpaw was in the medicine den with Dreamheart who actually had called her there for a reason I didn't know. I had noticed her frequently keeping an eye on Faithpaw but never asked why. After a while, She called me in, too.

As I approached, Faithpaw was walking out and didn't meet my eyes. I frowned and approached Dreamheart who wore a solemn expression. "Dreamheart, is something wrong?" I asked, somewhat concerned.

"Well it's about Faithpaw, I was asking her some..,questions. Her mental state is not in a Good place. It's normal for her to grieve for

a long time considering her and her half-brother were so close, but I don't think she's getting better. She can't train like this and even you know it."

I didn't respond, unwilling to admit that she was right.

"Its strange because she has friends, she has family and everything else a clan cat could ask for. She has the perfect life in the clan. You and goldeneyes do everything you can for her and yet...it's like losing Waterpaw overgoes all of it..."

I nodded. Suddenly a question pricked at my pelt. "Did you tell her yet?" I asked in a whisper. Dreamheart shook her head. "She can't possibly handle such news in her current state. Then it would be for sure that she wouldn't recover."

I felt relieved and also saddened.

"She knows nothing except that everyone is afraid of her. She doesn't even know about her real father or what he did."

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I left the den to try to recollect my thought. I just sat down in the clearing, watching the apprentices. Faithpaw was crouched on the sandy ground with Forestpaw seeming to be talking to her gently.

I approached them slowly, coming up to Forestpaw without Faithpaw noticing. "I want to talk to you." I whispered to him. He nodded and followed me a little ways from her.

"I know that Faithpaw hasn't been acting like herself ever since what happened, but I just need you to keep trying." I told him. He just gave me a beaming smile.

I loved that smile. I always did.

The smile of someone who was in love. Someone who was proud. Faithpaw's smile.The smile she had never shown until the day she told me she was expecting. It wasn't until then that I had ever seen her truly smile. It was then that I had finally understood.

"You will find what is left of what is gone if you have faith in the

forest..."

It made sense now.

" Smoketrail!" Forestfire called, his eyes sparkling with excitement. He an I not caught my attention, and I padded over to him, curious to what he wanted to show me as he slowly backed into the nursery, hiding something from my sight.

"Forestfire....?" I questioned.

"Surprise!" He moved out of the way, presenting Faithheart, exhausted, gently grooming a small brown tabby kit. Faithheart looked up at me, faintly smiling. "This is Brackenkit....He also has two sisters, Bramblekit and Fogkit."

Bramblekit was rusty brown, with her sister being light gray.

I smiled.

I put my Faith in forest. He repaired my Faith with kits.

Where Trust Lies

Hey guys I hope you enjoyed this story and look forward to the Sequel *Where Trust Lies* following brackenkit!